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CAN SAINTS MAKE BARCA WAY PAY?



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**EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW**

**SAINTS LEGEND AND
FA CUP WINNER JIM
STEELE TALKS
EXCLUSIVELY TO THE
SPORTS PINK ABOUT:**

- 1976 AND ALL THAT
- DRINKING WITH PELE
- NICOLA CORTESE
- ALL THINGS SAINTS

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CUP OF JOY: Jim Steele, left, celebrating the 1976 FA Cup win with Peter Rodrigues, right, and Peter Osgood.



SCHNEIDERLIN: MY FRENCH DREAM

HIS performances in the Premier League this season have already won him many admirers, and Morgan Schneiderlin is now hoping he can catch the eye of France coach Didier Deschamps.

Schneiderlin has looked at home during his first campaign in the top flight, bringing a blend of sophistication, elegance and hard work to his central midfield position.

By Gordon Simpson

The 23-year-old, pictured, has certainly been one of the stand-out performers for Saints this term.

He is the highest-ranked player

in the Premier League for tackles per game, among the top five in interceptions, and has a pass success rate that stands at an impressive 84.4 per cent.

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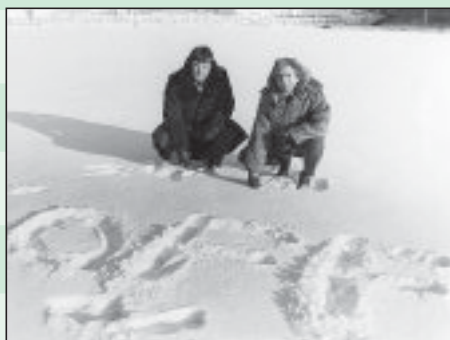
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**RBS 6
NATIONS
PREVIEW
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Ambition at the cost of common decency



OUT: Nigel Adkins'
sacking has left a
bitter taste in the
mouth.

AFTER the dust has settled and time has passed, we find ourselves in a position where we can ask "do we feel any different about the sacking of Nigel Adkins?"

For me, personally, I still feel devastated at Adkins' dismissal and I don't think that will ever go away.

However, I can see the reason behind it and accept it. With Adkins it was the classic example of the right man, at the right place, at the right time.

Put simply, Nigel Adkins put a smile back on the face of Southampton Football Club.

He was precisely what the club needed at the time and I, for one, will always be grateful to him.

It's not up for debate, it's not something that stats and arguments of ambition can ever diminish. We owe him a huge debt. What is disturbing is the number of emails I've received that dispute Adkins' ability, state that he was somehow holding us back and, most surprisingly, still wasn't a Premiership manager.

Being a Premiership manager isn't some sort of secret



club, it's not something you get voted into, it's something you earn.

Nigel Adkins earned the right to be a Premiership manager, it's not by luck or good fortune, he became a Premiership manager through hard work and effort and it's hugely insulting to write off his contribution to the club by suggesting he's not good enough for this league.

I will always be grateful to Nigel Adkins for what he did for all of us and I'd be hugely disappointed in our fanbase if any Saints fan was so callous as to dismiss the man and his impact on Southampton Football Club... which is why the club's behaviour after his dismissal leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

You want to move on, you want to take the club to the next level?

I don't have a problem with that and, if anything, I applaud your ambition.

One of the reasons we struggle with Adkins' dismissal is that deep down inside, when it comes to the Premier League, we're still small

time, we still believe we're here to pick up the scraps from the master's table.

Ask yourself, what do you want from this season? Survival? A finish one place above the relegation zone?

If that's what you want then you're no different to me, but you're spectacularly different to our chairman.

As fans we still seem to believe we don't truly belong in this league and perhaps that's why we can't stomach Adkins' dismissal.

Ask yourself where do you feel Saints would be under Adkins in two years time?

My answer would be: a solid mid table side, a Fulham or a Stoke, established in this league, tough to beat, but ultimately not actually doing anything.

That's the real reason why Adkins left us.

For Saints fans the harsh truth is that Nicola Cortese is a bit of a culture shock for all of us in so much as that mid table obscurity isn't really good enough for him.

I can see Cortese's long-term plan and I can see why Adkins was removed. I get it

and I applaud the chairman's ambition. I'm not daft, I can remember two years ago we bemoaned the loss of Alan Pardew and questioned the appointment of Scunthorpe manager Nigel Adkins – this was madness surely?

It wasn't and it proved to be one of the best appointments in our club's history.

Who's to say Pochettino won't be even better?

I loved Nigel Adkins' time at this club but I also have faith in our chairman, who to date has got it all right.

That said, as we move forward I have a serious message to the chairman: ignore the fans and our history at your peril.

You can airbrush Nigel Adkins out of our history and produce a match-day programme that ignores his vast contribution to the club.

You can forcibly remove placards that merely thank the previous manager for all he's done for us.

You can do all that as you run our club, it's your choice, but just show a little class.

Acknowledge the huge impact Nigel Adkins made on our club, thank him and allow the fans of this club to show that appreciation.

That's how you move forward as one...

CONTACT US - CALL: 023 8042 4515

Saints Spotlight

BRIGHT FUTURE: Morgan Schneiderlin is praying for a call-up to the French national team.



Schneiderlin holding out for La Bleus call

From front page

It is no wonder that his reputation has been growing substantially. But is there a chance that he could eventually be honoured with a call up by Les Bleus?

"To be honest, I have no phone calls or anything, but I just do my job and if it comes it comes," said a patient Schneiderlin, when asked if he had been given any indication of a senior international future.

"I know that in the French national team there are a lot of good players, almost every player who is in the squad plays Champions League or Europa League. I'm battling for staying up in the Premier League, so maybe the manager is not looking for this, but hopefully in one year or two years we can do something about it."

Schneiderlin, who moved to Saints in 2008 from RC Strasbourg, for a fee of £1.2m, already has plenty of experience of international football at youth level.

He has been capped by France at every age group from under-16s through to under-21s.

And, while he was never going to come onto the radar of the senior team with Saints outside of the Premier League, now that the club are back at the elite level he has the opportunity to impress. Of course, Schneiderlin may

need to build up a larger body of work than just one season of top-flight English football before he will come under serious consideration from Deschamps, who took over the national team last summer, but his performances so far will have done his chances no harm.

He enhanced his standing even more earlier this week, when he was voted man of the match in Monday night's televised encounter with Everton, at St Mary's, in front of a global audience.

ON THE RADAR: France coach Didier Deschamps is the man Morgan Schneiderlin hopes to impress.



FA CUP ROUND-UP

HATTERS GO MAD IN NORWICH

LUTON produced the surprise result of the FA Cup fourth round today with a 1-0 win at Premier League Norwich.

Scott Rendell's 80th minute goal proved decisive in a clash between two sides separated by 85 places in the English football ladder.

The Blue Square Premier side's victory at Carrow Road means they are only the seventh non-league team to reach the fifth round of the competition since World War Two.

Norwich were not the only top flight team embarrassed today, as MK Dons won 4-2 at QPR.

Former Saints boss Harry Redknapp, pictured, who made sweeping changes ahead of Tuesday's visit of Manchester City in the league, saw his team thrashed by their League One opponents.

QPR knocked MK Dons out in the third round of this competition last year, but Armand Traore's fourth-minute own goal and Ryan Lowe's 40th-minute effort gave the visitors control at half-time.

Ryan Harley (50) and Darren Potter (56) made it 4-0 before Jay Bothroyd and Fabio pulled two goals back inside the last seven minutes for the Premier League side.

Manchester City booked their place in tomorrow's fifth round draw with victory in the early kick-off at Stoke.

Pablo Zabaleta struck the only goal five minutes from time as City repeated the scoreline which won the 2011 final against the same opponents.

Yet victory may still have come at a cost for Roberto Mancini's men after captain Vincent Kompany limped off in the first half.

Olivier Giroud, who netted twice in the midweek defeat of West Ham in the Barclays Premier League, repeated the feat as Arsenal won 3-2 at Brighton.

The Frenchman gave the Gunners a 16th-minute lead at Brighton, but Ashley Barnes' header levelled the scores 17 minutes later.

Giroud restored the visi-

tors' advantage 11 minutes into the second half, only for Argentinian striker Jose Ulloa to level on his debut six minutes later.

However, Theo Walcott struck to win it for Arsene Wenger's side five minutes from time.

Johnny Heitinga's 90th-minute goal gave Everton a 2-1 success at Bolton. Steven Pienaar's scrappy 18th-minute goal gave David Moyes' men the lead before Marvin Sordell - whose two goals saw off Sunderland in their third round replay - squared things nine minutes later.

Reading eased into the last 16 with a 4-0 win over Sheffield United.

Noel Hunt opened the scoring in the sixth minute, Mikele Leigertwood's long-range goal against one of his former teams doubled the advantage five minutes before the break, before

Hunt and Garath

McCleary made sure of the win within nine minutes of the second half starting.

Blue Square Premier Macclesfield were unable to emulate

Luton's exploits, Jordi Gomez's seventh-minute penalty giving Premier League Wigan a 1-0 win at Moss Rose.

There was late heartbreak for League Two Aldershot at Championship Middlesbrough.

Danny Hylton's 89th-minute goal appeared to have earned the Hampshire side a replay but Lukas Jutkiewicz added to his 83rd-minute effort with a last-minute winner.

Blackburn were convincing 3-0 winners at Derby thanks to goals from Colin Kazim-Richards (45), Scott Dann (66) and Jordan Rhodes (71), while Chris Dagnall's goal 20 minutes from time decided another all-Championship clash in Barnsley's favour at Hull.

Lee Novak's 74th-minute penalty gave Huddersfield, under the leadership of caretaker manager Mark Lillis following the sacking of Simon Grayson, the lead against Championship rivals Leicester.

However, Chris Wood earned a replay for the visitors with a goal eight minutes from time.



Saints Spotlight

Fans Focus

SAINTS fans have been keen to have their say on new boss Mauricio Pochettino following his first game in charge against Everton.

The website dailyecho.co.uk has seen a huge surge of traffic following Pochettino's appointment in place of Nigel Adkins.

There have been thousands of readers comments posted and a poll about the decision that has attracted more than 12,500 votes.

Here at The Pink we take a look at some of the views being expressed by Saints fans from across the globe.

SPIKEISLANDTRADER says...

Good solid game, great support from the faithful, now its time to see what MP can do and IF cortese is vindicated, although still hate the way it was done. COYR

LeTissiersEarLobe says...

"Long balls" and "vertical football" worries me a bit Still saying that weren't they so hungry first half, even Gaston chasing, chasing, chasing, was great to see! Seems like they need more fitness after running out of puff in second half.....? Luke Shaw so composed, my MOTM. Good luck Nigel, we haven't forgotten you even if the match programme has!! Good luck to the new man!



BOSS: New Saints manager Mauricio Pochettino.

Dubai-saints89 says...

His real test is against Manchester Utd next week. Anything but a draw would be good all round but if we win, then I won't be sorry Adkins got the sack. MP magic would have worked and the club will go on a successful roll.

Southampton boy says...

He's got some time now to work with the team and who knows, he could bring yet another player or two in as NC has said there is money in the pot. It was a good solid performance last night, should have had three points but some games go this way. Man Utd next, this will be as been said his biggest test.

ghk230473 says...

Great performance and there was an obvious difference in our play, we were in their faces and were closing down with urgency. Fellani is a big player for everton and looks like he does the job of two, can't see him being there long! Positive start and I hope it lasts.

Continued on facing page.

RAISING A GLASS

Simon Walter
simon.walter@dailyecho.co.uk

THE mop of red curls is long gone, but Jim Steele's passion for Saints still burns bright.

Since returning to Southampton earlier this season, the Saints legend has been a regular at St Mary's as well as the city's pubs, the habitat where he is most fondly remembered since the passing of The Dell.

We meet at the West End Brewery, where he is holding court at the bar.

His views are delivered thick and fast, in his broad Scottish accent.

"Nigel Adkins was treated disgracefully but the fans have to get behind the new guy now...when I first joined Southampton every team had at least four Scots in the team but all the kids seem to do now is go on the bloody computer...It would be fantastic to chat with fans about our experiences on matchdays but Nicola Cortese has gone over the top...we miss Lallana...Luke Shaw's being built up too much...I realise the youngsters want to go on to bigger and better things but what have Bale, Chamberlain and Walcott ever won?"

Certainly less than Steele, the man-of-the-match when Saints won the FA Cup on that glorious day at Wembley nearly 37 years ago.

Inevitably, conversation soon comes round to 1976.

Steele is in reflective mood.

He caught up with several former teammates at the funeral of another ex-Saint, Ken Jones, the previous week, a few days after he and Jimmy Case bumped into Gordon Strachan, Steele's boot cleaner at Dundee in the early seventies, en route back from a Spanish holiday.

"I asked Gordon whether he'd got the Scotland job but he wouldn't let on - not that the information would have been worth anything to me as he was 12-1 on!" Steele laughs heartily, as jovial a figure off the pitch as he was formidable on it.

"Six-foot-two, eyes are blue, Jimmy Steele is after you," went the chant when the talented defender lined up for Saints during the mid-seventies.

He is still fondly remem-



PARTY TIME: Jim Steele celebrating the 1976 FA Cup win with Peter Rodrigues and Peter Osgood and, right, raising a glass.

bered, despite spending only four years at The Dell after Ted Bates paid a then club-record £80,000 for his services in January 1972.

"When you think of today's transfers with all those agents," he sighs, pint of lager in hand, as he recalls the day his life changed forever 41 years ago.

"I was on some field in Dundee - we didn't have training pitches in those days - when this taxi pulls up and the driver asks the coach if James Steele's around?"

"He didn't know what was going on, he just said he'd been told to take me to Dens Park. I'm thinking someone's died."



THE PINK & DAILY ECHO: BEST FOR SAINTS NEWS AND VIEWS

Saints Spotlight

TO JIM STEELE...

Fans Focus

milton road says...

I was so pleased to be wrong. I thought Everton would win last night. The support handled things fantastically well, they supported the team and MP, but certainly made it very clear that NA was not forgotten. The team played well for the most part and the keeper looked very good tonight. Sometimes we do not get the acknowledgement for what we are achieving. We are in the middle of a very tough run. In four of the last five games we have drawn against top ten sides. Stoke and Chelsea away, Everton and Arsenal at home. With a little more luck we would have won three of them. To put last night's effort into context, Everton have lost only three times in 31 games. Welcome MP. There is though 'ONLY ONE NIGEL ADKINS'

right back in the bar says...

Last night confirmed the progress NA made in organising this team and how much a number of players have come on under him. Morgan Schneiderlin was immense (again) and is already my player of the season. JC is important next to him. Luke Shaw beyond belief. Begs the question why? But that's got that out of the way and I'm moving on. What the new guy has



OUT: Saints fans have paid tribute to sacked boss Nigel Adkins.

to do now is transform these performances into victories by getting the team to score goals during periods of dominance. AL coming back will make a difference but I can't help thinking we need another striker to partner RL and an out and out winger to get behind in wide positions. Only downer about the performance last night was JRod. No lack of effort but just looks out of his depth – muscled out of it again and again and no instinctive understanding with RL.

Sunny Saint says...

Dear Mr. Pochettino, please understand that the kindness that you observed or even felt coming from the magnificent fans was not directed at you mate. It was directed at the players. Okay, Nige has gone and you are now at the helm, so it's now time for you to cut your cloth accordingly and start us on the road to Champions League football. Unfortunately, just having premiership survival is not enough. Why would it be? That is what we already had with Nige. Besides, if you don't provide, then NC will ensure that you will end up sleeping with the fishes. COYR-UTS

Continued on page 6.

career before it began.

"A few weeks earlier I'd been picked for Scotland at the same time as Tommy Docherty – I sat on the bench with Kenny Dalglish against Belgium – but as soon as I moved to Southampton that was it. Anywhere south of London and they didn't notice you."

Steele received five per cent of the £80,000 transfer fee, which he used as a deposit on a house in Chandler's Ford.

He made 200 appearances under Ted Bates and then Lawrie McMenemy, one of which stands out above the rest.

'Amazing Grace' is the voicemail message on Steele's mobile phone, but 'Abide With Me' would be more appropriate, so vital was his performance at Wembley on May 1 1976.

"The '76 FA Cup run was one of those fantastic things. It all began with Hughie Fisher scoring in the last minute against Villa in the third round. Hughie never scores, a bit like me really.

"We had to go to Villa for the replay on a Wednesday night and didn't think we had much chance, but as we went past Wembley on the train Channon said 'we'll be there'.

'Yeah right,' we thought, but after beating Villa 2-1 we said 'you could be right'.

"We got fairly easy draws, we drew a couple away and kicked West Brom's arse at home, then beat Crystal Palace quite easily in the semi-final after getting them instead of Man United or Derby."

The off-field drinking exploits of Steele and co. are almost as

CONT ON
PAGE 6

"So I get to Dens Park, walk in the door and Ted Bates is standing there.

'Hi. I'm Ted Bates, Southampton,' he said. 'You've just signed for Southampton, you've got an hour to get ready.'

'Where's Southampton?' I said. 'Seriously!' I was surprised, I thought I was supposed to be going to Leeds

as Norman Hunter's stand-in as he and Jack Charlton were getting on.

"But there were no ifs or buts, that was it!

"We flew down and Ted put me in a B & B round the corner from the Dell, showed me where the Dell was and said training's at ten – be there at 9.15.

"I said 'Aye' – I couldn't

speak English then – and was so excited I got there early.

"No-one was there but I saw my name above my peg in the dressing room and was in my underpants when big Ron Davies walked in the door: 'Are you that guy from Scotland we've just signed?' 'Aye!' 'A lot of money for a

Freckle,' he said. Ron was a good lad, magic."

While Steele cherishes his time with Saints, he believes the move ended his Scotland

Saints Spotlight

Fans Focus

From page 5...

Bring back Branfoot says...

Sacking Adkins was the right decision, taken at the wrong time. He should have walked the plank after the West Ham game and not in the middle of a transfer window. It was handled badly (Nicola should have finessed the whole situation). The new guy is saying the right things, he wants us to have more of a cutting edge. If this Poch character is decent, he'll get more out of the players' attributes than Nige did. Those who stayed away are being petulant, and are not helping the club. More like they can't stand that NC does his own thing and is not trying to win a popularity contest. As it should be when you're the head honcho!

richard1946 says...

I live in Australia and can only see Saints matches on TV. I am glad the Saints supporters did not boo the new manager like the Chelsea supporters do! Only a few weeks ago when Saints



KEY MAN: Saints fans have urged the new boss to stick with Jason Puncheon.

drew with Stoke after being 3-1 up everyone wanted NA's head. Now in the Echo 94 per cent say it was unfair he got the sack? They played well against Everton but need to start winning home games!

TLoSaintsChi says...

I felt that his style of play was entertaining, and he respected what Adkins has brought to the club. Although a wave of foreign players will be coming to the club, this shouldn't affect the likes of Puncheon, Lallana and Lambert as they are three core players who will be guaranteed a place for years to come. As hurt as I was about Adkins' departure and the way Cortese has handled it, I want to get behind 'Pochi' and see what he can do for us saints in the future

Buddy SFC says...

Strange old world! Gutted last week at seeing NA going, yet less than a week later and I feel excited about the future! Shallow I may be, but really interested to see if NC/MP has made an impact and can bring in another quality player or two in this last week of the transfer window.

Continued on facing page...

STEELE FORGED A

From page 5

their performances on the field.

"On the eve of one away game, [Mick] Channon tells me to get some beer.

"I said 'we're playing tomorrow' but he said 'this is our last chance'.

"I got six cases of beer for five or six of us.

"Of course, McMenemy finds out and goes absolutely mad, saying 'if I knew you were going to drink I'd have brought the reserve team up here!'

"But we won. On another occasion, a few days after the semi-final - we were told to make our way to Hayling Island, where we were staying before playing Pompey.

"Ossie (Peter Osgood), [Jim] McCalliog and myself went down Cowherds for a couple of drinks and a couple more and a couple more - and then two for the road!

"When we got to the hotel George the trainer came out and said we might as well go home - so we thought we might as well go for another drink!"

Steve Williams and Pat Earles made their debuts in a 2-1 win at Fratton Park that night.

"There was a threat that Osgood, McCalliog and I wouldn't play in the final, but that was never going to happen," smiles Steele.

Most Saints fans will not need reminding that it was from McCalliog's exquisite pass that Bobby Stokes scored the most famous goal in the club's history.

"We were under severe pressure for the first 20 minutes but at half-time Lawrie asked what I thought. I told him 'if we score, we win'.

"Luckily enough, that was the case. Tommy Docherty still says the goal was offside, but that's life!"

While Stokes will always be remembered as the match-winner, Steele's heroics are not forgotten either.

"Stokesy got a car for scoring the goal and kept it when he couldn't even drive!

"I got an extra £2,000 and split it between all the guys. But my share soon went as I paid for my parents to stay for the week with two friends."

Steele's two younger brothers - "both Jambos" - watched Hearts lose 3-1 to Rangers in the Scottish Cup final at Hampden

"All the locals in the pub were drinking out of the FA Cup and then we took it into the centre of town."

Park, while he frustrated a United side including Stuart Pearson, Lou Macari and Steve Coppell at Wembley.

"I could read the game, I knew when someone would dart forward and would just step up," he says.

"I was always the last man as [full-backs] Peachy (David Peach) and Pedro (Peter Rodriguez) would always go for-



ROLLING BACK THE YEARS: Jim Steele in action for the ex-Saints XI.

ward, leaving me and Mel Blyth, who would be marking him man.

"I have an affinity with Bobby Moore, he wasn't very quick but could read the game and so could I. I just moved up, which p****d Pearson off!"

Steele remembers the celebrations as though they were yesterday.

"It was the last time the Queen presented the FA Cup but when all the wives and girlfriends asked what she had on all we could reply was 'black gloves!'

"I was very happy for the likes of George Reader, the chairman. Everyone was over the moon.

"We had to stay in London, which sucked, but Ossie (Peter Osgood) did a runner and got a car back to Windsor."

The next day around 250,000 people welcomed their heroes back to the south coast during an open-top bus tour of Southampton.

"Ossie had to run quicker than I'd ever seen him to get on the bus!

"We went round the Ford plant at Eastleigh, and on to Millbrook and Shirley. Everywhere was packed with Saints supporters. It was out of this world!"

"Mick Channon's testimonial against QPR was on the Monday and we were still half drunk, with fans sat on the touchline."

During the celebrations, Steele, Osgood and Stokes took the silverware to the Drummond Arms in Portswood, where Steele had been staying with landlord Jimmy McGowan, a former Southampton player who would tragically take his own life when financial worries took hold in the mid-eighties.

"All the locals were drinking out of the Cup and then we took it into the centre of town," continues Steele.

"After a couple of burgers, we drank coffee out of it and Ossie left it by McMenemy's door the next morning.

"When Lawrie called us back in he

"Pele drank with us, but he didn't like to drink in public so as not to harm his status with the kids."

told us Keith Honey, the secretary, had nearly had a heart attack but Ted Bates was doubled up laughing his head off. We knew we were okay then!

"I told Keith's daughter that story at his funeral six months ago! They were fantastic times."

Less than a year later, Steele played his last game for Saints, his top-flight career over at the age of 26.

He was sent off at Old Trafford following persistent clashes with Jimmy Greenhoff, as Manchester United had their revenge, winning an FA Cup fifth-round replay 2-1 in March 1977.

The following week, Steele was made the scapegoat for Saints' European Cup Winners Cup exit against Anderlecht at The Dell.

His slip gifted the winning goal to Andt Van Der Elst with seven minutes remaining of the two-legged third-round tie, as Saints lost 3-2 on aggregate.

"That was my last hurrah, that was basically when I got dumped," he laughs. "Ted MacDougall hit the post three times, Ossy hit the bar twice and then they blamed me for getting beat! I told them that afterwards!"

Steele did not play in Britain again. Instead he moved to the United States to captain Washington Diplomats under former Manchester United player

CONTACT THE SPORTSDESK - EMAIL: echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Saints Spotlight

BIG REPUTATION



FLASHBACK: Jim Steele, above right, with Jim McCalliog and Peter Osgood at the Daily Echo printing press in 1976.

Dennis Viollet, one of the survivors of the Munich air disaster.

"A few clubs were in for me, including Rangers, but I'd just got divorced, the money was good, I was given a free car and a free apartment," says Steele, who played against some of world beaters in the States.

"One day, Dennis told me he needed me to go to a press conference ahead of a game against New York Cosmos.

"I was supposed to be playing golf but he persuaded me to go with a couple of others - including my best mate Eric Martin (the former Saints goalkeeper).

"The place was packed so I wound the window down and asked what was going on, only to be told that (mimicks American accent) 'New York Cosmos had signed some players called Pele, Beckenbauer and Carlos Alberto!'

"Pele said he didn't drink when we

were offered Budweisers, but when the press conference finished we were invited by his entourage to a suite on the top floor of the hotel.

"Pele then brings out a bottle of whisky and asks if it's any good!

"We said it wasn't bad and he said 'I thought you two were Scottish!'

"Pele drank, but not in public so as not to harm his status with the kids. Fantastic!"

Steele went into the pub trade on his return to the UK in 1994, running the Chamberlayne Arms in Woolston and the Kings Arms in Shirley before moving to the Cotswolds, where he was landlord of the Black Bear in Moreton-in-Marsh for many years.

It was from there that he returned to Southampton five months ago.

Suffice to say, he has received a warmer welcome in the city's hostel-

ries than he has at the football club.

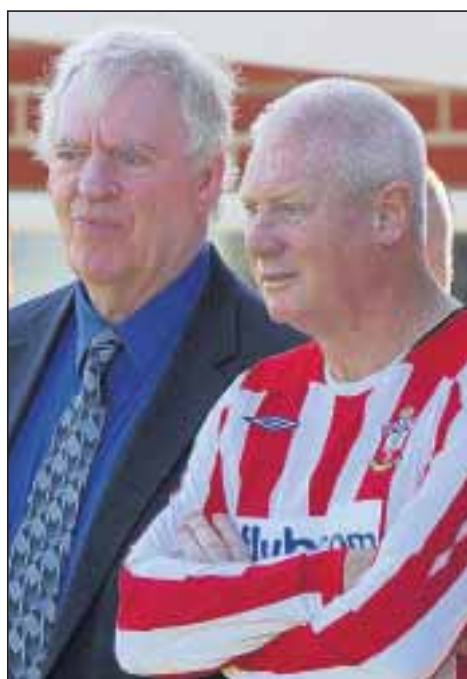
"I'd heard all the things about Le Tissier and Cortese and this and that, so when I bought two tickets for the Aston Villa game soon after moving down, I gave my name as 'James Steele'.

"I was hardly going to say 'Jim Steele' even though the girl at the ticket office was only young and wouldn't have known who I was.

"But the guy behind her said 'I thought it was you Steeley!' I said 'don't say anything, I might not get a ticket!'

"I don't totally disagree with what's been going on, so I bought two tickets thinking one of the ex-Saints would show up sooner or later.

"I went on to the supporters club below the stand and two or three came over to shake my hand and say it was great to see me back in town.



GREAT MEMORIES: Jim Steele with Lawrie McMenemy, above, and with Mick Channon and Hughie Fisher, below.



Fans Focus

From page 6...

TSS says...

Personally pretty happy with the squad. To achieve Cortese's ambition we will have to strengthen, but at the moment we have a well gelled team. A bit like Norwich last year, that are playing well. I'm hoping for one Spanish midfielder, a playmaker maybe. Will be interesting to see what MP thinks of the current squad.

SaintMax says...

I think we still have to invest in the side. Yes we have played very well and to an extent matched the likes of Chelsea, Arsenal and Everton, but we have no depth. Our bench is light on talent, and that shows when we play great for 65 mins, make some substitutions and the whole flow is completely disrupted. We can not hope that the current 11 or so stay fit for the run in, as if Lambert, for example, received a bad knock that kept him out for six weeks we would be toothless.



HISTORY: Ex-Saints boss Nigel Adkins.

allsaintsnocurves says...

It's natural to link so many different players with a new manager...but don't expect us to sign all of them! MP will want to bring in a couple of players who know his style of football because it will be easier for him to get others to follow their lead. This is not to damage the development of the youngsters already on the books but to enhance their development into the Spanish way of training. This will increase the level of skills amongst the players and speed with which they can make decisions on the pitch during games. English players don't always have the vision or awareness of the continental players and this needs to change if we are to be successful in the future playing a style similar to Barcelona.

angus mc coatup says...

I think the manager is doing exactly the right things. He's looking at players from a culture that he has played, and managed in. It's a good long term aim to use academy, and other young players brought in, but surely the number one priority is to preserve our Premier status and if we have to import a few Spanish or South Americans to realise those ambitions then so be it. I'm as annoyed as most people about Nigel's removal but that's history now.

CONT ON PAGE 8

CONTACT THE SPORTSDESK - CALL: 023 8042 4515

Steele's happiest memories

From page 7

every game since."

Now 62, Steele is twice divorced and lives in Waltham Chase with Jill Smith, his partner of 11 years.

"She's different class, I taught her the pub business and she's probably better at it than me, but she's now got a job looking after people with dementia."

"When I asked if she was sure she wanted to do it, she said she'd be okay and that it would help her look after me in a couple of years!"

Steele reveals the cortisone injections he had in his groin prevented him from having children.

"I had them twice a week for two-and-a-half months, I couldn't walk the next day but would be fit as a fiddle the next."

"It was only when I went to America and the wife wanted kids that I found out."

"I went to see what's wrong and a test showed it was the cortisone injections."

"It probably cost me a marriage, but I've met Jill and she's different class."

They met while Steele was enjoying an evening out with Osgood, one of many former teammates to have passed on in recent years.

"It's not the same nowadays," he sighs as he recalls the likes of Bobby Stokes and John McGrath.

"I miss the guys; Ossy was only 58, Bobby 44 and although we didn't play together I also had a lot of time for Bally (Alan Ball), who was only 61."

Steele is a little rheumy-eyed as he recounts his next tale.

"I got these black cashmere coats made to measure, the sort worn by Jose Mourinho, when I went to Thailand with Jill seven years ago."

"One was for Ossie and his long arms, one for Casey (Jimmy Case) and one for myself."

"Ossie loved it but the first time he wore it was at his uncle's funeral – where he dropped dead of a heart attack."

"Ossie's son tells me he still has the coat but Casey gave his to his brother, who wouldn't wear it, and mine's still hanging in the wardrobe!"

Steele has enjoyed meeting other former teammates since returning south.

"Hughie Fisher and I took Brian O'Neil out for a drink last week, but he only drinks orange juice now."

"He lives on Hill Lane so I said 'we'll meet you in the The Winston'."

"He said 'I can't go in there, they don't allow dogs!' He dotes on his lovely little cocker spaniel!"

"Jimmy Gabriel's another character. 'I'm not drinking all week,' he once said. 'We'll see about that,' we replied."

"By the Friday we were surprised he still hadn't had a drink."

"Saturday morning comes round and he's been drinking the night before we play Arsenal!"

"He said he had to have a drink with John Wayne, who had been on the telly the previous night! Nuts!"

As he reaches the dregs of his second pint, Steele admits he is unsure about the immediate future.

"We decided to get out of the pub trade but I love it and I miss it now," he admits.

"I don't know if I'm looking for another pub or not. I'm supposed to see one in Shirley at some point but I'm not sure I fancy it."

"There are so many chains that monitor all the pumps now and that's not for me."

"Maybe I should give Gordon a call and ask if he needs another Scotland coach."

"I'll remind him he used to clean my boots!"



JIM STEELE

Saints Spotlight

THE MODERN GAME

FLASHBACK: Markus Liebherr and Nicola Cortese wave to fans after Saints had won the 2010 JPT final at Wembley.

Simon Carter

simon.carter@dailyecho.co.uk

SPORTS EDITOR

AMID all the many words written on the subject of Nigel Adkins' shock departure, one five-word sentence should jar with Saints supporters.

It was written in the *Sports Pink* last weekend by chief sports writer Adam Leitch.

Commenting on the regime of chairman Nicola Cortese, Leitch reflected on the current state of Southampton Football Club.

"The fans are customers now," he wrote.

That struck a chord with me, the fact one of my colleagues described supporters as 'customers'.

"There is no doubting that Saints, once one of the most homely and welcoming of clubs, have changed beyond recognition," Leitch went on.

"It's not that any more. 'Saints is less a football club there for the community in which it stands, and more a business.'"

Strong words. Sacking Adkins was by no means the first controversial move Cortese has made in recent years.

Dispensing with Alan Pardew after a 4-0 win at Bristol Rovers provoked an outcry at the time.

Many fans have also criticised the fact that season ticket prices have shot up in price (though, to be fair, Saints have risen two divisions and it would be a shock if prices had been pegged at third division levels).

In the summer of 2011 the concession for season ticket holders aged between 60 and 64 years was withdrawn, a decision condemned as "mean spirited" by fans at the time.

For the first time ever, blind fans now have to pay to watch Saints.

Previously, the club gave free admission to supporters who suffered serious sight problems.

Last summer that changed, and



RARE OUTING: Saints' white kit, which is on sale to fans but which has only been worn in one away game, at Liverpool, this season.

son – is no longer available to buy.

Pay and display booths were put up in the St Mary's car parks. Previously fans and staff could park there for free, now only a few minutes is free.

Extra costs have been introduced for fans buying matchday tickets via debit cards.

Previously booking fees were paid for transactions, whereas now

an adult season ticket for anyone who previously had free entry would have cost almost £500.

There is more.

Nigel Adkins, Jason Dodd and Kelvin Davis were told they could not attend a function at The Mayflower Theatre to celebrate Saints' 125th anniversary.

Some fans are unhappy that the white away kit has only been worn once away from St Mary's all season, at Liverpool, with only one other likely 'appearance' left – at Norwich.

While fans can buy this kit that is so rarely used, the yellow away shirt – worn far more often this sea-



NIGEL ADKINS

SEE MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO FOR MORE SAINTS NEWS

Saints Spotlight

IS WITHOUT MERCY

"Sacking Adkins was by no means the first controversial move Cortese has made."



CHALK AND CHEESE: Rupert Lowe, left, loved to talk at press conferences, while Nicola Cortese never appears at them.

there is a separate fee per ticket – either if you buy online, over the phone, or at the stadium in person.

Talking of tickets, half-season tickets are no longer available.

Long-serving programme sellers were axed.

Andrew Murray, who had always previously sold programmes in an area underneath the stands at St Mary's, was told, at fairly short notice, he had to vacate his room.

Talking of programmes, Saints made back page news in the national press earlier this week for failing to mention Nigel Adkins' name once in the Everton programme.

In my eyes, that was a disgraceful snub on a man who had overseen

back to back promotions.

The saddest thing, though, was that no-one should have been surprised.

Saints legend Matt Le Tissier hit out at Cortese for failing to attend Mauricio Pochettino's unveiling interview at St Mary's, where the chairman could have explained his decision to the media.

No doubt his predecessor at Saints, Rupert Lowe, would have been there.

Lowe often spoke at press conferences. Many Saints fans thought he spoke too much.

Cortese, though, doesn't make many public statements, and he never holds press conferences.

I guess you can't have it both ways, can you?

One chairman is castigated by saying too much, another for not saying much at all.

That was one thing, but to then not mention Adkins at all in the Everton programme was petty and sad.

Sad for Saints fans, because it (needlessly) gave their club a bad name in the national press.

Regarding the programme, Le Tissier also appears to have been air-brushed out of history.

A recent advert for a new apartment complex included the wording 'appearance by ex-Saint'.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



LE TISSIER

BOOK of the WEEK

The Outsider: A history of the goalkeeper
By Jonathan Wilson

Sportsbookofthemonth.com
price: £12.80, saving 36% on rrp

MANY readers will recall from their schooldays that when it came to picking the football teams to contest frenetic lunchtime matches, unless someone volunteered to go in goal, it was invariably the remaining two boys who went in first.

On reflection, this seems a little odd, given that successful professional goalkeepers are often referred to as 'eccentric' or 'idiosyncratic' when at school most of their classmates considered them to be the worst footballers.

They've certainly always needed to be thick-skinned, for as Jonathan Wilson points out in this superbly-researched, thought-provoking book, goalies can often find themselves the scapegoat when their teams lose, even though they may have played a blinder.

Wilson, who enjoyed enormous success with *Inverting The Pyramid*, a history of football tactics, has come up with something equally engrossing.

In addition to including several incisive interviews and memories of goalkeeping greats such as Lev Yashin and Dino Zoff, the author considers how the goalkeeper's role has evolved over the past century. Given how pivotal the position is, it's a wonder that no-one has written so authoritatively and decisively about it before.

Thankfully, Wilson is quite content to go off at compelling tangents, for example when he considers the political support enjoyed by two men vying for the goalkeeping position in the Cameroon national side. Such diversions make travelling with a fine writer a hugely enjoyable journey. Moreover, his references to literary greats such as Albert Camus (himself, famously, a goalkeeper) and Vladimir Nabokov and their writing about this solitary position, serve to garnish Wilson's excellent dish.

Most of us can recall outstanding saves, moments upon which matches, league titles, even World Cups have hinged. While there's been a whole library of books written about strikers, the game's literary annals are strangely short of goalkeeping-related titles. No matter how many come along from now on, few will be better than this.

We've teamed up with Sports Book of the Month & have two copies of *The Outsider* to give away. To win this week's sports book, go to their website (www.sportsbookofthemonth.com) and answer the following question:

Who is the most capped goalkeeper in the history of international football?

FOR MORE SAINTS NEWS VISIT: www.dailyecho.co.uk/sport



Answers: 1 Gerard Alexander; 2 Rodney Parade; 3 Gloucestershire; 4 Brett Hodgson; 5 1990 (Wimbledon); 6 Lille; 7 Australia; 8 The Grizzlies; 9 Mexican; 10 Rome's Stadio Olimpico; 11 Tottenham; 12 India; 13 Middlesbrough; 14 He was during a World Cup race; 15 Barcelona; 16 Arsenal; 17 Tyrell; 18 Diving (10m platform); 19 San Francisco 49ers; 20 2003 (Ken Doherty); 21 New England Patriots; 22 Bubba Watson; 23 Newcastle (1998 and 1999); 24 Jon Clark; 25 Sara Errani.

Paine's World

The Saints legend's **EXCLUSIVE** column on all things football



Bantams success brings back memories of my Spot of bother!

IT TURNED out to be a night to remember.

Tiny Bradford City, from the fourth tier, produced one of the greatest cup upsets ever seen in English football.

Aston Villa, of the Premier League, failed to overturn a 3-1 deficit from the first leg of their Capital One Cup semi-final when they met their opponents at Villa Park on Tuesday.

It was not just this one-off fixture that makes Bradford's passage to Wembley so special, but the accumulation of beating Villa on top of victories over Arsenal and Wigan in this season's competition.

You have to go back more than 50 years for the last time that a fourth-division side got to the League Cup final.

It was 1962 to be exact, with Rochdale making it all the way.

Their opponents then were Norwich, in a two-legged final. Those continued until 1966 before it changed to a one-off match.

That 1962 final brought back memories for me, and not particularly good ones.

Saints drew Rochdale in the first round of that year's competition, at The Dell, drawing 0-0.

Two weeks later, we travelled to the Spotland stadium, only to lose 2-1, with Derek Reeves scoring our solitary goal.

Although humiliated by the loss, it did help soften the blow somewhat when we saw Rochdale go all the way to the final, eventually losing to Norwich at Wembley.

The Bantams may be Bradford's nickname, but in this competition they have certainly punched above their weight.

Hopefully the financial windfall from their cup run will help to secure their future.

Twice they have been in administration since 2002, and they had been expected to overspend on wages by £600,000 this season as they pushed for promotion to League One.

The fact that a lowly side has been able to overcome such odds does restore your faith in the old game somewhat.



CUP HERO: Bradford City's James Hanson, left, celebrates scoring Bradford's goal at Villa Park.



CUP VILLAIN: Chelsea's Eden Hazard, right.

It has demonstrated that the glory doesn't only land in the pockets of the rich and famous that make up the ego-driven Premier League.

I think Bradford manager Phil Parkinson is still trying to come to terms with the achievement, after their 4-3 aggregate win.

He has already turned down an approach from Blackpool for their vacant managerial position.

His services could well be sought by others, though, as the countdown to Bradford's final on February 24 begins.

The League Two side will face Swansea, after they held the reigning European champions, Chelsea, 0-0 at the Liberty Stadium in the second leg of their semi-final, following on from their 2-0 victory at Stamford Bridge.

This will be Swansea's first

major final.

The nearest they had previously come was in 1964, when they reached the FA Cup semi-final, losing 2-1 to Preston North End, who themselves were beaten in the final by West Ham, 3-2.

Swansea had a tremendous boost before the game when it was announced that prolific Spanish forward Michu had signed a one-year contract extension with the club.

Michu was brought to Swansea by their latest manager, Michael Laudrup, who has continued the good work put in place by Brendan Rodgers and overseen a steady improvement from the Welsh side.

The gloss was taken off the result, however, by one of the most extraordinary incidents I can remember seeing in a game of football – Eden Hazard's clash with a Swansea ballboy.

Replays showed Hazard attempted to kick the ball while the youngster was lying on top of it.

As frustrating as it was for Chelsea, the spectacle of a player becoming physically involved with a ballboy left referee Chris Foy with little option but to show a red card.

It will be interesting now to see how the FA deal with it.

They have already charged the player and say the standard three-match ban would be "clearly insufficient".

Away from that, it should be remembered that both sets of players from the winning teams made history for their respective clubs.

I'm sure that the 31,000 ticket allocation on offer to both will be snapped up.

Not only is this final good for the game, but in Bradford's case it is particularly special, after the city was left devastated following the stadium fire in 1985 that killed 56 people and left many more injured.

Their big day at Wembley will hopefully bring them great joy.

Reviewing the Hazard incident, I have been trying to think of any other unsavoury clashes from over the years.

St James' Park springs to mind.

Newcastle, already 3-0 down to Aston Villa and battling with ten men, suddenly saw two of their players having a real set-to in the middle of the pitch.

Lee Bowyer and Kieron Dyer had fallen out, and, after the ensuing fight, both were red carded.

The players were then forced to appear at a post-match news conference in order to apologise for their behaviour.

Clubs should spare a thought for hard-pressed fans

GIVEN the economic hardship Europe is experiencing, it is remarkable that Real Madrid have remained football's biggest money maker for the eighth straight year. The Spanish champions are the

first sports team anywhere to break the £500m revenue barrier, as they stay ahead of rivals Barcelona in the football money league compiled by accountancy firm Deloitte.

Manchester United, who have dismissed suggestions they have diluted their brand by announcing a glut of new sponsorship deals, remain third, with a fall of three per cent to £320.3m after exiting

last season's Champions League at the group stage, which reduced their television income. United were followed by Bayern Munich, European champions Chelsea, then Arsenal.

Perhaps with so much money being made by Premier League teams, a reduction in prices for away tickets may bring some cheer and economic relief to the hard pressed supporter.

CAN SAINTS MAKE THE

SAINTS' players were given a guided tour of the Nou Camp this week and how appropriate that might be for a club that appears set on a Spanish approach.

Whether it is borne out of a fashion much beloved by Nicola Cortese, or a very sensible and well thought through plan, Saints look set to go very continental.

They started some time ago with the scrapping of the reserve team, a trend which was closely followed elsewhere.

There have been attempts to get the whole club, from senior team through to youths, all playing the same formation and the same style to allow easy progression through the system.

And of course the whole set up of the club has a continental feel, with transfers and policies appearing to be decided involving the manager rather than solely by the manager.

The sacking of a very British manager in Nigel Adkins and his replacement with an Argentinean with managerial experience in Spain seems to be the latest piece in the jigsaw.

The fact the squad almost immediately flew out to Barcelona with their new boss and looked around the European giant's home ground, seems to be offering up inspiration for where Saints want to be as well.

Some will no doubt argue this approach is the death of the club, others that this is a visionary ideal.

A lot of these ideas and methods are not exactly new, they just drift in and out of fashion.

Successful youth systems, producing your own players, playing an attacking and passing style of football with high pressing are things that have been seen at Saints for years and years and years on and off.

We have even seen the club ease off the control of all things on the playing side from the manager, but that has in fairness to Saints been a general trend across the football world over the past decade or so.

The approach Saints are seemingly implementing is not exactly shattering the mould, but it is still slightly out of the norm for English football.

We saw Rupert Lowe attempt to put in place a similar structure at the club.

Such was his standing in the eyes of the fans it was never likely to be welcomed,



NEW DAWN AT ST MARY'S:
Saints manager
Mauricio
Pochettino.

'Fans love to talk about facilities, infrastructures and academy systems when the first team is winning. When they are losing it doesn't matter a jot'

Adam Rant



and indeed it ultimately failed.

Cortese maybe can pull it off.

Though some of his ideas are much closer aligned to those of Lowe's than Saints fans would like to admit, he has overseen a period of success and his stock is high enough to give him the chance to try it.

We all know how football works and ultimately all that will matter is the first team results.

Fans love to talk about facilities, infrastructures and academy systems when the first team is winning. When they are losing it doesn't matter a jot.

If Mauricio Pochettino's new style – presumably based on a high pressing game with Gaston Ramirez in the hole – is a success then Cortese will be lauded.

And, despite all the criticism elsewhere, Adam Rant will say it will be deserved because, agree with it or not, hate or applaud the way it was done, what he did in replacing Adkins was a bold decision indeed.

If it doesn't go well the blame will be laid squarely at his door.

Given Saints' apparent lofty goals for the future, the real test will be whether their next visit to the Nou Camp is for a match rather than a guided tour.



UNSUNG HERO: Morgan Schneiderlin, left.

DETERMINED MORGAN MOVES

IT'S been great to see a few headlines for Morgan Schneiderlin this week because they are so well deserved.

You won't hear any Saints fans or players failing to recognise his contribution, but elsewhere he is vastly underrated.

Maybe this suits Saints, who surely would have a real battle to retain his services if he came to the attention of a few more clubs, not only in this country but also abroad where his style would very much fit in.

His determination to improve himself has been every bit as impressive as Rickie Lambert's.

All right, Schneiderlin may have had age on his side unlike his older striking

colleague, but he has transformed his game.

The first time Adam Rant saw Schneiderlin play at Staplewood many moons ago now it was obvious he had something about him.

In fact, Adam Rant can recall being stuck in an office with Rupert Lowe, pictured right, who would not stop talking about this French youngster the club were going to sign and how he was going to become one of the top Premier League footballers.

He wouldn't say the name, and you never really knew if this was Lowe's over enthusiasm to get involved with all things football or genuinely true.

It later turned out he was correct because that player was Schneiderlin.

When he first arrived his ability on the ball was immediately obvious, that wonderful range of passing, the ability to get the ball and very rarely ever give it away. It's not as easy as it looks from the stands.

However, for all that the first couple of seasons in English football were without doubt a culture shock.

Schneiderlin had never lived away from home, and initially didn't speak English.

He had no experience of English football and



BARCELONA WAY PAY?

Rickie ready for next level

Case for the defence ...

WE ARE entering the final few days of the transfer window and it will be fascinating to see whether Saints make any further moves following the appointment of Mauricio Pochettino.

Despite the signing of Vegard Forren they could surely do with a little more cover at centre half.

It's such an important area of the team and one that you just cannot afford to leave yourself short in.

It was certainly interesting to hear Pochettino say he thought the club could continue without further additions.

Whether this was his assessment of the party line to trot out as there weren't to be any more, time will tell.

Saints have shown a real penchant for bringing in attacking flair but, as interesting and exciting as this has been, Adam Rant's assessment is that some of the less glamorous areas of the squad need attention first.

Whether that will be the Saints way however we will see.

BOLD MOVE:
Nicola Cortese.

RICKIE Lambert for England could really happen.

The striker's teammate, Jason Puncheon, suggested in the *Echo* this week that he thinks it not only could but should be a reality.

The last time it was talked about it was pie in the sky but it now feels like a very real possibility.

Given that all the indications are that Roy Hodgson will name an experimental squad for the friendly against Brazil at Wembley early next month, then Lambert has to be in with a shout.

Putting together the stats on Lambert's competitors for a berth in the squad gave an even greater sense of possibility.

Hodgson is known to like to have a big man as an option up front too which weighs in Lambert's favour.

The competition for that role is not that intense.

Andy Carroll has been out injured and, though due back very shortly indeed, surely won't be considered fit enough. Grant Holt, pictured above, has also struggled for form this season while Peter Crouch has been in and out at Stoke.

For the last friendly Hodgson named Wayne Rooney, obviously a shoe-in when available, as well as Danny Welbeck and Daniel Sturridge.

It wouldn't be a surprise if the latter gets another call

'Lambert offers something different and has proved himself to be every inch the Premier League player'

given he has hit the ground running at Liverpool.

Any call for Welbeck would be more on what he has shown he can do in the past than his current form which has been up and down.

And, though he is a decent presence, he is more rangy than physically strong in the way Lambert is.

Dip beyond that and you are looking at more of the small and pacy type strikers with the likes of Theo Walcott and Jermaine Defoe deservedly top of the list.

They are at more glamorous clubs than Lambert, and have more glamorous backgrounds, but Lambert offers something different and has proved himself to be every inch the Premier League player.

He has not only scored goals – ten in the top flight and counting – but has also performed very well.

He has shown he can be a force to be reckoned with for the very best defenders, his physical presence and ability to peel onto full backs causing havoc even against some of the very best defences around.

You have to be honest when weighing these things up and say that age does go against him.

At 30 years old and in his first season in the top flight he is not exactly one for the future or an experienced head.

Hodgson is trying to replace some of the old guard with fresh blood and, while Lambert isn't tainted with past failures, he also isn't young.

Of course, Hodgson will also want a bit of experience in there too but Lambert's career at the highest level has been short thus far.

That said, he should still be able to perform to a very high level for a few years yet, so Hodgson should not count him out of being around for at least one major tournament.

Does Lambert deserve it?

Absolutely he does. Jason Puncheon is quite correct about that.

It would be a fairytale story and just remarkable for such a nice and likeable guy.

He can have done no more to press his case, and that's about as high a compliment as you could pay him.

UP THROUGH GEARS

was giving a bruising baptism.

Firstly it was as part of the young side that were relegated from the Championship, and then against the brutes of League One who knew there were ways to stop him playing.

Alan Pardew and Nigel Adkins could see the potential as well though and worked with him to help develop him into the player he is today.

However, none of it could have happened without Schneiderlin's determination.

To improve so much physically you have to want to do it.

You have to be prepared to get dirty, to get kicked, to stand your ground against physically bigger and stronger players.

It's not easy and there are many examples of players, particularly from France, who haven't fancied that and so had talent unfulfilled in England and generally ended up moving back abroad again.

Schneiderlin though has bucked that trend and is actually the most productive defensive midfielder in the major European leagues now.

All this from a guy who was known as the attacking midfielder who couldn't score goals, couldn't tackle and was easy to scare out of a game up until a couple of years ago.

It's a brilliant turnaround and, like so many of the talents at Saints, he deserves much praise for making it happen.















PRESSING HIS CASE:
Rickie Lambert.



Saints Spotlight



SAINTS' FIRST TEAM FIXTURES AND RESULTS 2012/13

																
AUGUST																
Sun 19 Man City	A	L 2-3	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Ward-Prowse**	Schneiderlin	Lallana	Puncheon***	Do Prado	Rodriguez*	Lambert* 1	S Davis** 1	Sharp***
Sat 25 Wigan	H	L 0-2	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	Schneiderlin	Schneiderlin	Lallana	Do Prado	Rodriguez**	Lambert	W-Prowse*	Sharp**	Hoskins***
Tues 28 Stevenage (COC 2) . . .	A	W 4-1	Gazzaniga	Butterfield	Richardson	Seaborne	Shaw	Chaplow*	W-Prowse	Hammond**	Puncheon 1	Lee 1	Sharp*** 1	Reeves* 1	Chambers**	Hoskins***
SEPTEMBER																
Sun 2 Man United	H	L 2-3	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Hooiveld	Fox	W-Prowse	Schneiderlin 1	S Davis	Puncheon*	Lallana***	Lambert** 1	Mayuka*	Do Prado**	Rodriguez***
Sat 15 Arsenal	A	L 1-6	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Hooiveld*	Fox 1	W-Prowse	Schneiderlin	S Davis**	Puncheon	Lallana	Lambert***	Yoshida*	Ramirez**	Rodriguez***
Sat 22 Aston Villa	H	W 4-1	Gazzaniga	Clyne 1	Fonte	Yoshida	Fox*	S Davis***	Schneiderlin	Lallana	Puncheon** 1	Ramirez	Lambert 2	Richardson*	Mayuka**	W-Prowse***
Tues 25 Sheff Wed (COC 3) . . H		W 2-0	Gazzaniga	Richardson	Hooiveld	Yoshida	Seaborne	W-Prowse	Cork**	Chaplow	De Ridder	Do Prado*	Rodriguez*** 2	Reeves*	Robinson**	Hoskins***
Sat 29 Everton	A	L 1-3	Gazzaniga	Richardson	Fonte	Yoshida	Clyne**	W-Prowse	S Davis	Lallana***	Rodriguez*	Ramirez 1	Lambert	Mayuka*	Reeves**	Chaplow***
OCTOBER																
Sun 7 Fulham	H	D 2-2	Gazzaniga	Richardson*	Fonte 2	Yoshida	Fox	S Davis	Schneiderlin	Lallana	Puncheon**	Rodriguez	Lambert***	Hooiveld*	Chaplow**	Do Prado***
Sat 20 West Ham	A	L 1-4	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Hooiveld	Yoshida	S Davis***	Schneiderlin	Lallana 1	Puncheon**	Do Prado	Rodriguez*	Lambert*	Mayuka**	W-Prowse***
Sun 28 Tottenham	H	L 1-2	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Fox***	Puncheon*	Schneiderlin	S Davis**	Lallana	Rodriguez 1	Lambert	Mayuka*	Do Prado**	Reeves***
Tues 31 Leeds (COC 4)	A	L 0-3	K Davis	Butterfield	Hooiveld	Seaborne	Reeves	W-Prowse	Chaplow	Do Prado	De Ridder**	Mayuka	Lee*	Shaw*	Isgrove**	Reeves***
NOVEMBER																
Mon 5 West Brom	A	L 0-2	Gazzaniga	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Fox***	Ramirez**	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Lallana	Rodriguez*	Lambert	Mayuka*	Do Prado**	Shaw***
Sat 10 Swansea	H	D 1-1	Gazzaniga	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw*	Schneiderlin 1	Cork	Puncheon	Ramirez	Lallana	Lambert	Fox*		
Sat 17 QPR	A	W 3-1	Gazzaniga	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw**	Schneiderlin	Cork	Puncheon 1	Ramirez*	Lallana	Lambert*** 1	S Davis*	Fox**	Rodriguez***
Sun 25 Newcastle	H	W 2-0	Gazzaniga	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw***	Schneiderlin	Cork	Puncheon	Ramirez** 1	Lallana 1	Lambert*	Rodriguez*	S Davis**	Hooiveld***
Weds 28 Norwich	H	D 1-1	Gazzaniga	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw*	Schneiderlin	Cork	Puncheon**	Ramirez	Lallana	Lambert 1	Reeves*	Rodriguez**	
DECEMBER																
Sat 1 Liverpool	A	L 0-1	Gazzaniga	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw	Schneiderlin	Cork*	Puncheon**	Ramirez	Lallana	Lambert	S Davis*	Rodriguez**	
Sat 8 Reading	H	W 1-0	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw	Puncheon 1	Schneiderlin	Cork	Lallana*	Rodriguez**	Lambert	Ramirez	Do Prado**	
Sat 22 Sunderland	H	L 0-1	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw	Puncheon***	Schneiderlin**	Cork	Mayuka*	Mayuka*	Lambert	De Ridder*	Do Prado**	Do Prado***
Weds 26 Fulham	A	D 1-1	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw	Schneiderlin	Cork	Puncheon	S Davis*	Ramirez**	Lambert 1	Rodriguez*	Do Prado**	
Sat 29 Stoke	A	D 3-3	K Davis	Yoshida	Fonte	Hooiveld	Shaw*	Puncheon**	Schneiderlin	Cork	Do Prado	Rodriguez 1	Lambert 1	Fox*	Richardson**	
JANUARY																
Tues 1 Arsenal	H	D 1-1	Boruc	Cork	Fonte	Hooiveld	Shaw	Puncheon	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Do Prado***	Ramirez** 1	Lambert*	Rodriguez*	W-Prowse**	De Ridder***
Sat 5 Chelsea (FAC 3)	H	L 1-5	Boruc	Cork	Fonte**	Yoshida	Shaw	Schneiderlin*	S Davis	Puncheon***	W-Prowse	Do Prado	Rodriguez 1	De Ridder*	Hooiveld**	Lee***
Sat 12 Aston Villa	A	W 1-0	Boruc	Clyne	Yoshida	Hooiveld	Shaw***	Puncheon**	Schneiderlin	Cork	Ramirez*	Rodriguez	Lambert 1	Fox	S Davis**	De Ridder***
Weds 16 Chelsea	A	D 2-2	Boruc	Clyne	Yoshida	Hooiveld	Shaw	Puncheon 1	Schneiderlin	Cork	Do Prado***	S Davis**	Rodriguez*	Lambert* 1	Chaplow**	Ramirez***
Mon 21 Everton	H	D 0-0	Boruc	Clyne	Yoshida	Hooiveld	Shaw	Schneiderlin	Cork	Puncheon***	Ramirez**	Do Prado*	Lambert	Rodriguez*	S Davis**	De Ridder***
Weds 30 Man United	A															
FEBRUARY																
Sat 2 Wigan	A															
Sat 9 Man City	H															
Sun 24 Newcastle	A															
MARCH																
Sat 2 QPR	H															
Sat 9 Norwich	A															
Sat 16 Liverpool	H															
Sun 31 Chelsea	H															
APRIL																
Sat 6 Reading	A															
Sat 13 West Ham	H															
Sat 20 Swansea	A															
Sat 27 West Brom	H															
MAY																
Sat 4 Tottenham	A															
Sun 12 Sunderland	A															
Sun 19 Stoke	H															

	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG		LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG		LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG
KELVIN DAVIS	8	0	1	0	282	0	JACK STEPHENS	0	0	0	0	0(1)	0	RICKIE LAMBERT	20(3)	10	0	0	171(10)	98
PAULO GAZZANIGA	9	0	2	0	11	0	DAN SEABORNE	0	0	3	0	38(15)	0	JAY RODRIGUEZ	11(9)	2	2	3	13(9)	5
ARTUR BORUC	6	0	1	0	7	0	STEVE DE RIDDER	0(5)	0	2	0	12(32)	4	EMMANUEL MAYUKA	1(6)	0	1	0	2(6)	0
NATHANIEL CLYNE	20	1	0	0	20	1	RICHARD CHAPLOW	0(2)	0	3	0	50(13)	5	GASTON RAMIREZ	13(3)	3	0	0	13(3)	3
DANNY BUTTERFIELD	0	0	2	0	50(4)	0	DEAN HAMMOND	0	0	1	0	130(15)	11	BILLY SHARP	0(2)	0	1	1	12(6)	10
FRAZER RICHARDSON	2(2)	0	2	0	57(10)	0	JACK CORK	13	0	2	0	81(8)	0	TADANARI LEE	0	0	2(1)	1	7(5)	2
DANNY FOX	7(4)	1	0	0	46(8)	1	MORGAN SCHNEIDERLIN	22	2	1	0	153(28)	5	SAM HOSKINS	0	0	0(2)	0	0(2)	0
LUKE SHAW	13(1)	0	2(1)	0	15(3)	0	ADAM LALLANA	16	2	0	0	190(19)	49	CALUM CHAMBERS	0	0	0(1)	0	0(1)	0
RYAN DICKSON	0	0	0	0	9	0	STEVE DAVIS	12(8)	1	1	0	13(8)	0	BEN REEVES	0(3)	0	1(2)	1	4(9)	1
JOSE FONTE	20	2	1	0	136(1)	12	JAMES WARD-PROWSE	4(4)	0	4	0	10(4)	1	ANDY ROBINSON	0	0	0(1)	0	0(1)	0
JOS HOOIVELD	9(2)	0	2(1)	0	52(3)	8	JASON PUNCHEON	20	4	2	1	65(4)	8	LLOYD ISGROVE	0	0	0(1)	0	0(1)	0
MAYA YOSHIDA	19(1)	0	2	0	21(1)	0	GULY DO PRADO	7(6)	0	3	0	76(25)	22							

KEY: LA: league appearances. LG: league goals. CA: cup appearances. CG: cup goals. CSA: career Saints appearances. CSG: career Saints goals.

Cherries/Pompey Spotlight

PORTSMOUTH FIXTURES 2012/13

AUGUST

14 Plymouth (A) (CC) ... L 0-3
18 Bournemouth (H) ... D 1-1
McLeod
21 Colchester (A) ... D 2-2
Rodgers, Obita
25 Carlisle (A) ... L 2-4
Harris, Clifford

SEPTEMBER

1 Oldham, H ... L 0-1
4 Bournemouth (H) (JPT) D 2-2
Won 4-3 on pens
Rodgers, Howard
8 Crawley Town (A) ... W 3-0
Harris, Rodgers, McLeod
15 Walsall (H) ... L 1-2
McLeod
18 Swindon (H) ... L 1-2
Michalik
22 Notts County (A) ... L 0-3
29 Scunthorpe (H) ... W 2-1
Gyepes, Thomas

OCTOBER

2 Yeovil (A) ... W 2-1
McLeod, Gyepes
6 MK Dons ... D 2-2
McLeod, Gyepes
13 Crewe ... W 2-0
Thomas, McLeod
20 Shrewsbury (H) ... W 3-1
McLeod (2), Thomas
23 Stevenage (A) ... L 1-2
Harley
27 Sheff Utd (A) ... L 0-1

NOVEMBER

3 Notts County (FAC) ... L 0-2
6 Brentford (H) ... L 0-1
10 Bury (A) ... L 0-2
17 Doncaster (H) ... L 0-1
20 Leyton Orient (H) ... L 2-3
McLeod, Allan
24 Coventry (A) ... D 1-1
McLeod

DECEMBER

8 Tranmere (A) ... D 2-2
Gyepes, Jarvis
15 Preston (H) ... D 0-0
26 Crawley Tn (H) ... L 1-2
Benson
29 Yeovil (H) ... L 1-2
Benson

JANUARY

1 Swindon (A) ... L 0-5
5 Walsall (A) ... L 0-2
12 Notts County (H)
19 Scunthorpe (A)
26 Hartlepool (H)

FEBRUARY

2 Colchester ... (H)
9 Bournemouth ... (A)
12 Hartlepool ... (A)
16 Carlisle ... (H)
23 Oldham ... (A)
26 MK Dons ... (H)

MARCH

2 Crewe ... (A)
9 Bury ... (H)
12 Leyton Orient ... (A)
16 Doncaster ... (A)
23 Coventry ... (H)
30 Preston ... (A)

APRIL

1 Tranmere ... (H)
6 Stevenage ... (H)
13 Brentford ... (A)
20 Sheff Utd ... (A)
27 Shrewsbury ... (A)

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PITMAN TREBLE FIRES CHERRIES

Cherries 3 Crewe 1

BRETT Pitman's hat-trick in this 3-1 win finished off a productive week for Cherries.

Six points from six planted Eddie Howe's side firmly in the League One play-off picture after the defeat against Walsall had left some questioning whether that was the best Cherries could hope for. Not on this form, **writes NEIL MELDRUM.**

A slight wobble 15 minutes from time, when Ryan Colclough made it 2-1, was also little to worry about as Pitman's two penalties, one in each half, and goal on 67 minutes was more than enough to see off Crewe.

Howe made two changes from the side that beat Hartlepool on Tuesday night. Charlie Daniels missed out with a foot injury, with Steve Cook coming into central defence and Dan Seaborne switching to left-back.

Pitman, pictured, returned to the starting line-up in place of Richard Hughes as Howe opted for a 4-4-2 set-up with Cherries back in home soil.

The home side started brightly, with Harry Arter blazing over when well placed inside the 18-yard box following Pitman's corner.

And it was the Channel Islander who put Cherries in front from the spot inside the opening ten minutes after Marc Pugh's clever turn had drawn a foul from Adam Dugdale.

Just two minutes later, Cherries should arguably have had another penalty after Pugh went to ground again, this time under a challenge from Luke Murphy. Referee Iain Williamson waved it away.

Cherries continued to push, with Josh McQuoid's header going close thanks to Simon Francis's cross from the right – so nearly yet another assist for the right-back. Cherries had further chances, too, Pitman narrowly missing the target with a header on 32 minutes after some intricate passing and movement between Lewis Grabban and Francis and a dipping cross from McQuoid.

On the stroke of half-time, Grabban could have made it 2-0. The striker latched on to Eunan O'Kane's precise through ball but, having rounded Crewe keeper Steve Phillips, placed his left-foot strike on the angle into the side netting.

McQuoid continued to impress after the break, but Pitman was unable to steer his shot on target having been expertly played in by the midfielder.

At the other end, Max Clayton fired over the bar. Crewe were boasting plenty of the ball, but seemed unable to convert their possession into goal scoring opportunities.

Pitman climbed magnificently to get on the end of McQuoid's cross just after the hour but could only head directly into the hands of Phillips.

The absence of Daniels played into McQuoid's hands, with the majority of Cherries' best attacks coming from the right. He gave former Wessex League defender Jon Guthrie, on his full debut, a torrid time in the second half.

Still Cherries pushed and hurried. The



crowd noise slowly built as they sensed the game was beginning to open up in favour of the hosts.

Phillips saved well at the near post from Grabban, but his parry from Arter's shot moments later fell to McQuoid, who crossed for Pitman to tap in his second of the afternoon.

It should have been 3-0 on 73 minutes when Phillips again parried, this time directly on to Arter's head from Francis's cross. Arter, though, almost surprised, could only nod the ball over the bar.

There was a sting in the tail, however. Mathias Pogba stormed into the box from the left channel unchallenged and substitute Colclough simply made sure his shot on target found the back of the net. 2-1 and game on.

Not for long, though.

Williamson pointed to the spot for a second time nine minutes from time after Abdul Osman had felled substitute Wes Fogden. Pitman stepped up and drilled the penalty right down the middle. Game on to game over in minutes.

Pitman's last hat-trick had been for Cherries against Peterborough in his final game before moving to Bristol City and he was replaced here by Richard Hughes just after his third. Howe would have wanted him to receive the ovation.

The result moved Cherries into fifth place in League One. They also became the division's highest scorers, bringing up their 50. Those are telling statistics.

Cherries: (4-4-2) Jalal; Francis, Cook, Elphick, Seaborne; McQuoid (Fogden, 80), Arter, O'Kane, Pugh; Grabban (Tubbs, 88), Pitman (Hughes, 83).

Unused subs: McDermott, Partington, Fletcher, Allsop.

Booked: Arter, Pugh.

Crewe: (4-4-2) Phillips; Mellor, Davis, Dugdale, Guthrie; Murphy, Osman, Inman (Colclough, 63), Moore; Pogba, Clayton (Leitch-Smith, 63).

Unused subs: Ellis, Turton, Ray, West, Garratt.

Booked: Osman.

Referee: Iain Williamson (Thatcham).

Attendance: 8,628 (280 away supporters).

BOURNEMOUTH FIXTURES 2012/13

AUGUST

14 Oxford U (A) (CC) D 0-0
Lost on penalties
18 Portsmouth (A) ... D 1-1
Barnard
21 MK Dons (H) ...
D 1-1
Grabban
25 Preston (H) ...
D 1-1
Elphick

SEPTEMBER

1 Sheff Utd (A) ... L 3-5
Barnard, Elphick, Pugh
4 Pompey (A) (JPT) ...
D 2-2
Lost 4-3 on pens
MacDonald 2
8 Yeovil (A) ... W 1-0
Hughes
15 Hartlepool (H) ... D 1-1
Tubbs
18 Brentford (H) ...
D 2-2
Tubbs, Daniels
22 Swindon (A) ... L 0-4
29 Walsall (H) ... L 1-2
Daniels

OCTOBER

2 Crawley Town (A) ... L
3-1
Barnard
6 Coventry (A) ... L 0-1
13 Leyton Orient (H) ... W 2-0
Grabban, Pugh
20 Tranmere (H) ... W 3-1
Pugh, Arter, Francis
23 Notts County (A) ... D 3-3
McQuoid, Arter, Tubbs
27 Carlisle (A) ... W 4-2
Pugh 2, Barnard

NOVEMBER

3 Dagenham (FAC1) ... W 4-0
Pugh, McQuoid (2), Fogden
6 Shrewsbury (H) ... W 2-1
Daniels, McQuoid
10 Doncaster (A) ... W 1-0
Arter
17 Oldham (H) ... W 4-1
Grabban 3, Daniels
20 Stevenage (H) ... D 1-1
Tubbs
24 Bury (A) ... D 2-2
Grabban, Pitman

DECEMBER

1 Carlisle (A) (FAC2) ... W 3-1
Fogden, O'Kane, Pugh
8 Scunthorpe (A) ... W 2-1
Grabban, Fogden
15 Colchester (H) ... W 1-0
Grabban
26 Yeovil (H) ... W 3-0
Grabban, Arter, Pitman
29 Crawley Tn (H) ... W 3-0
Alexander (og), Pitman, O'Kane
84

JANUARY

1 Brentford (A) ... D 0-0
5 Wigan (A) (FAC3) ... D 1-1
O'Kane
12 Swindon (H) ... D 1-1
Arter
15 Wigan (H) (FAC3R) ... L 0-1
19 Walsall (A) ... L 3-1
Pitman
22 Hartlepool (A) ... W 2-1
McQuoid, Grabban
26 Crewe (H)

FEBRUARY

2 MK Dons ... (A)
9 Portsmouth ... (H)
16 Preston ... (A)
23 Sheff Utd ... (H)
26 Coventry ... (H)

MARCH

2 Leyton Orient ... (A)
9 Doncaster ... (H)
12 Stevenage ... (A)
16 Oldham ... (A)
23 Bury ... (H)
30 Colchester ... (A)

APRIL

1 Scunthorpe ... (H)
6 Notts County ... (H)
13 Shrewsbury ... (A)
20 Carlisle ... (H)
27 Tranmere ... (A)

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Saints Spotlight

QUOTES of the week

Lance Armstrong admitted to doping in an interview with Oprah Winfrey. Here is a selection of what he said:

"That's like saying we have to have air in our tyres or water in our bottles. It was part of the job" – **Armstrong on doping in cycling.**

"I looked up the definition of cheating and the definition is 'to gain an advantage on a rival or foe'. I did not view it that way. I viewed it as a level playing field" – **Armstrong on cheating.**

"I didn't invent the culture, but I didn't try to stop the culture. The sport is now paying the price because of that" – **Armstrong, right, on the doping culture.**

"I was a bully in the sense that I tried to control the narrative, and if I didn't like what somebody said, and for whatever reasons in my own head whether I viewed that as somebody being disloyal or a friend turning on you or whatever, I tried to control that" – **Armstrong on bullying.**

"This might not be the most popular answer, but I think I deserve it (to be able to compete again). I deserve to be punished. I'm not sure that I deserve a death penalty" – **Armstrong on his lifetime ban.**

"I said 'Don't defend me anymore'. I said 'If anyone says anything to you, do not defend me. Just say my dad said he was sorry'.

"He said 'look, I love you, you're my dad, this won't change that'" – **Armstrong on how he told his son about his misdemeanours.**

"I don't like thinking about it, but that was a 75million-dollar day. Gone" – **Armstrong on losing his various sponsorship deals.**

"I said I wasn't going to watch it – I was determined not to watch.

"Then I got home and I watched it" – **Sir Bradley Wiggins, pictured, on Armstrong's television interview with Winfrey.**

"We have got that history with him. He never gave offside with (Chelsea striker Didier) Drogba at Old Trafford when he was three yards offside. Everyone remembers that – I certainly do.

"For me it was a poor performance from him. Why he never gave a penalty I don't know. I think he had a shocking game today.

"He's had a bad game and we never got anything from that side of the pitch" – **Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson** unimpressed with the performance of assistant referee Simon Beck in the 1-1 draw at Tottenham.



WHERE THE SWANS FLY SAINTS MAY FLUTTER

Simon Carter

simon.carter@dailyecho.co.uk

SPORTS EDITOR

DAVID Moyes might have hit the nail firmly on the head.

Previewing last Monday's game at St Mary's, the Everton boss was asked for his thoughts on Mauricio Pochettino's arrival at Saints.

The canny Scot quickly brought up the example of Michael Laudrup's appointment by Swansea last summer.

"You can see it's helped Swansea with Michael coming in," Moyes said.

"It's given them an opportunity to have a little bit of a head-start on players at the lower level who could possibly step up.

"I would expect him (Pochettino) to be very much the same."

And I would expect Moyes is not far from the truth.

Laudrup's signing of Michu from La Liga club Real Valleciano last summer is being widely held up as the Premier League's best signing of 2012/13.

For a cut price £2m, he has scored 16 league and cup goals this season.

In terms of value for money, compare his record to someone like Jay Rodriguez, who cost Saints three times as much.

But Laudrup has made other canny signings from Spain, where he went head to head against Pochettino last season as Mallorca manager.

Winger Pablo Hernandez was brought in from Villarreal for £5.5m, while the Welsh club spent another £2m on centre half Chico, who played under Laudrup at Mallorca last season while on loan from Italian club Genoa.

Another of Laudrup's signings was attacking midfielder Jonathan de Guzman, who is on loan from another La Liga club, Villarreal.

The Dutchman is on a season long loan at The Liberty



BARGAIN BUYS: Chico, above left, and top scorer Michu, right.

Stadium, after being deemed surplus to requirements by Villarreal a year after they paid £6m for him.

Swansea's fans were no doubt concerned that Brendan Rodgers' departure to Anfield might have ended the club's meteoric rise of the last decade.

But they reckoned without chairman Huw Jenkins, and his ability to make inspirational managerial appointments.

We are only in January but already Swansea are safe from relegation, and through to a first ever League Cup final to boot.

They have done it playing good football and winning friends.

And they have done it with a La Liga influence.

Saints fans will be hoping

Nicola Cortese's latest appointment turns out to be as inspirational as Jenkins' last one.

On the face of it, the comparison between Swansea and Saints is a good one.

Granted, Saints are a bigger club – far more impressive history and tradition, bigger fan-base, far bigger stadium, better academy.

Phenomenal

And unlike the Swans, Saints weren't very nearly relegated to the Conference in 2003.

Saints have come a long way in a short space of time, but Swansea have come further.

Their success story is a phenomenal one, and Saints have yet to equal it.

Nowadays, though, both the Swans and Saints are among a group of Premier League clubs aiming for a Europa League slot.

If not this season for Saints, then possibly in a few years' time if they stay up this season (and lest we forget, it remains an 'if' at present).

The ruthlessly ambitious Cortese might be eyeing the Champions League by then, but let's be more realistic here.

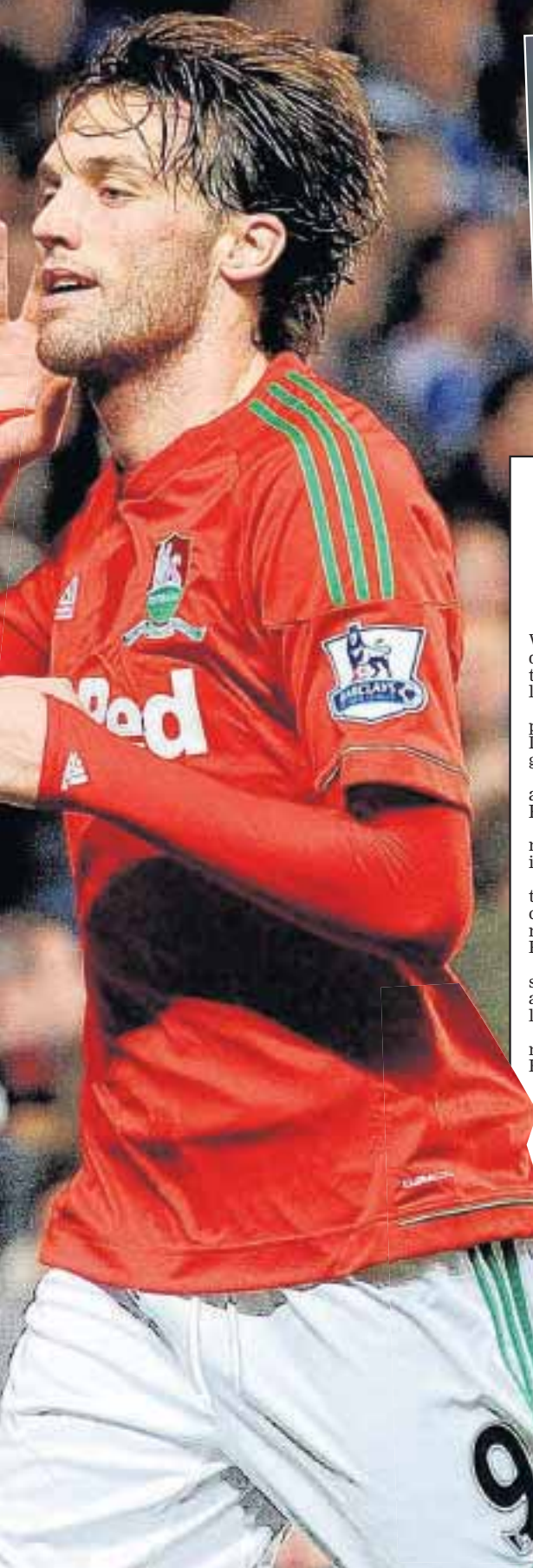
The kind of player Pochettino is almost certainly likely to be targeting is not that different to the sort of player brought in by Laudrup.

Pochettino, like his Swansea counterpart, will know La Liga well.

And we're not talking some minor European league here.

MANAGERIAL MUSICAL CHAIRS AT SAINTS - SEE PAGES 18-19

Saints Spotlight



COMMON GROUND: Both Michael Laudrup and Mauricio Pochettino managed in La Liga last season, and now both are in the Premier League.

We are talking the league which has produced the players that have won the last two European Championships and the last World Cup.

Pochettino will have a good idea which players could impress in the Premier League, while fitting in with Saints' budget and template for potential signings.

"Obviously first of all we will be looking at players coming through the academy," Pochettino admitted this week.

"Beyond that, Spain is obviously a market I know better than any other and is rich with talent."

Based on the fact that players coming through the academy won't be instantly challenging for the first team, that means La Liga is likely to be Pochettino's first call.

Laudrup has made a succession of signings around the £2 to £5m bracket, and I would imagine Pochettino will do likewise.

Saints, like Swansea, do not have the resources to make many Gaston Ramirez-type signings.

I would not be surprised if Pochettino oversees the arrival of £2m-£5m price range purchases from La Liga.

That has to be the way Saints are now going.

Otherwise, why bring Pochettino in. Saints' rise through the third and second tiers was based around English players.

The likes of Kelvin Davis, Dan Harding, Dean Hammond, Adam Lallana and Rickie Lambert were all regulars in the back to back promotion campaigns.

Down in League 1, the only continental flair was provided by Jose Fonte, Papa Waigo and Guly.

Now, all of a sudden, Saints are a league of nations again.

Heard the one about the Pole, the Argentine, the Norwegian, the Dutchman, the Portuguese, two Japanese, the Belgian, the Brazilian, the Frenchman, the Uruguayan and the Zambian aiming to keep their English club in the

Premier League?

Helping them to do that will be two Argentinian coaches and two Spanish coaches, overseen by an Italian chairman?

That's not a joke, it's the cosmopolitan nature of Saints these days.

You could also throw a Bajan into the cultural melting pot, but I can't see Jonathan Forte getting too much of a look-in at St Mary's these days, can you?

Some fans might bemoan the growing foreign influence at St Mary's, but this is the Premier League we are talking about.

Sprinkle

I don't see many Swansea fans protesting that they don't have enough players born in Port Talbot or Neath in their squad.

Look at many Premier League squads these days, and they have lots of foreigners.

Look at Wigan.

They have seven Spaniards, two Hondurans, a Paraguayan, a Chilean, an Argentine, a Slovakian and an Omani in their squad.

The landscape of the Premier League with regards to overseas players has not really changed in the last decade.

Managers are more likely to go abroad to sign experienced players – quite often internationals – for far less money than if they tried to sign an English-type equivalent.

Pochettino could probably sign an international striker from Spain or elsewhere in continental Europe cheaper than Charlie Austin at Burnley, for example, would cost.

Saints supporters would no doubt prefer Pochettino to sprinkle his squad with a handful of Michu-like signings, with a La Liga pedigree to their name, rather than dip into the Championship and pay £5m plus for unproven players at top flight level.

Never thought I'd say it, but Swansea are a great template for Southampton Football Club to follow.

QUOTES of the week

"It's a dream come true for me. Southampton is a big club in the Premier League, which is where I have always wanted to come and play football" – **Vegard Forren** after signing for Southampton.

"I hope I can convince them with hard work, honesty and that they enjoy the way the club plays and they feel honoured and proud how the team is playing" – **Mauricio Pochettino** reaches out to Southampton fans angry at the sacking of his predecessor Nigel Adkins.

"It was in the gents! That was nice, for my first meeting with the match referee" – **England one-day coach Ashley Giles**, who was spoken to by match referee **Andy Pycroft** in the toilet at **Ranchi airport** following **Kevin Pietersen's** show of frustration in the third one-day international.

"Marco Materazzi is lying, just lying. Everything that he said is a lie. Simple. So he's a liar" – **Rafael Benitez** angrily dismisses **Materazzi's** criticisms relating to life under the **Spaniard's** management at **Inter Milan**.

"I will have to put up a poster of myself now!" – **Sloane Stephens** can hardly believe it after beating **Serena Williams**, whose picture once adorned her bedroom wall, in the **Australian Open** quarter-finals.

"After Beijing I was out having a lash for a few months but this time I was straight back on the road thinking about this year" – **British Olympic Geraint Thomas**, right, after winning stage two of the **Tour Down Under**.

"I'm almost relieved it's over because there's only so much I felt I could do. It has been difficult. I have been thrown a lot of balls this week" – **Serena Williams** laments an injury-plagued **Australian Open** campaign after being knocked out by teenage prodigy **Sloane Stephens**.

"I found out about the captaincy last Wednesday evening. Declan gave me a call to go and see him. In I went and after a bit of chit chat he asked me to do the job and I nearly had to stop myself jumping across the table to kiss him, which would have made it really awkward in a room with just two guys!" – **Jamie Heaslip** clearly pleased to be named **Ireland** captain for the **6 Nations**.

THIS WEEK'S FOOTBALL FIXTURES - SEE PAGE 36

Saints Spotlight

MANAGERIAL MUSICAL

NOT for the first time in recent years, Saints fans are getting used to a new manager.

The arrival of Mauricio Pochettino continues the amazing game of managerial musical chairs at St Mary's.

Pochettino arrived after Nigel Adkins was sacked having lost just two of his last 12 league games in charge.

We should not have been surprised, though.

His predecessor, Alan Pardew, was given the boot after winning six of his last 10 league matches!

Here, the *Sports Pink* takes a look at Saints' managers of the last ten years, and how good, or bad, their starts and finishes were ...

GORDON STRACHAN

Strachan was appointed Saints boss in October 2001 just a few weeks after being sacked by Coventry City.

The Sky Blues had made a poor start to the 2001/02 Championship season after overseeing relegation from the top flight the previous May.

Strachan's appointment was not universally popular among Saints fans, and he lost three of his first four games, picking up just a point in the process.

But Saints' first ever league win at St Mary's, against Charlton, kick-started a recovery that eventually saw the club finish in mid-table safety.

Gordon Strachan's first 10 league games

Oct 24: Ipswich (H)	D 3-3
Oct 27: Fulham (A)	L 1-2
Nov 3: Blackburn (H)	L 1-2
Nov 17: Derby (A)	L 0-1
Nov 24: Charlton (H)	W 1-0
Dec 2: Everton (A)	L 0-2
Dec 8: Leicester (A)	W 4-0
Dec 15: Sunderland (H)	W 2-0
Dec 22: Man Utd (A)	L 1-6
Dec 26: Tottenham (H)	W 1-0

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	4	1	5	13

Saints were on the slide when Strachan resigned his post following a defeat at Arsenal.

He had revealed a few weeks earlier that he would be stepping down at the end of the 2003/04 campaign once his contract ended.

Saints were up to fourth after the pre-Christmas win against Portsmouth, but Strachan only won one of his last eight league games after that.

Gordon Strachan's last 10 league games

Dec 13: Liverpool (A)	W 2-1
Dec 21: Portsmouth (H)	W 3-0
Dec 26: Fulham (A)	L 0-2
Dec 29: Arsenal (H)	L 0-1
Jan 7: Leicester (H)	D 0-0
Jan 10: Birmingham (A)	L 1-2
Jan 17: Leeds (H)	W 2-1
Jan 31: Man Utd (A)	L 2-3
Feb 7: Fulham (H)	D 0-0
Feb 10: Arsenal (A)	L 0-2



FA CUP JOY: Gordon Strachan guided Saints to an FA Cup final.



BRIGHT START: Paul Sturrock's reign soured after a highly promising start.

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	3	2	5	11

PAUL STURROCK

Sturrock was another controversial appointment by chairman Rupert Lowe.

After Lowe had been over-ruled in his desire to bring back Glenn Hoddle, Saints went for the former Scottish international who was managing Plymouth in the third division.

Sturrock made a great start, beating Liverpool in a live Sky match in his first game in charge.

He actually won four of his first six

games, but the writing started appearing on the wall after he failed to win any of his last five in 2003/04. After just two games of the following season, he left St Mary's – a decision that was wrapped up in a 'by mutual consent' tag.

Paul Sturrock's 13 league games

Mar 14: Liverpool (H)	W 2-0
Mar 21: Portsmouth (A)	L 0-1
Mar 27: Tottenham (H)	W 1-0
Apr 3: Wolves (A)	W 4-1
Apr 12: Mboro (A)	L 1-3
Apr 17: Man City (A)	W 3-1
Apr 24: Bolton (H)	L 1-2
May 1: Chelsea (A)	L 0-4
May 8: Aston V (H)	D 1-1



PROMOTED: Steve Wigley went from youth team coach to first team boss.



ILL-FATED: Harry Redknapp's tenure was destined to end in failure.

May 12: Newcastle (H)	D 3-3
May 15: Charlton (A)	L 1-2

Aug 14: A Villa (A)	L 0-2
Aug 21: Blackburn (H)	W 3-2

First 10 games	P	W	D	L	Pts
	10	4	2	4	14

Last 10 games	P	W	D	L	Pts
	10	3	2	5	11

STEVE WIGLEY

Following Sturrock's departure, youth team manager Steve Wigley was promoted and given the 'head

coach' title.

Though many people thought he was the caretaker to start with, Wigley had been appointed as Sturrock's permanent replacement.

It proved a disastrous appointment, with Wigley failing to win any of his first 10 games in charge.

After only a single win in his 14 Premier League games in charge, and with Saints embroiled in a massive relegation scrap, Wigley was unsurprisingly relieved of his duties.

Steve Wigley's 14 league games

Aug 25: Bolton (H)	L 1-2
Aug 28: Chelsea (A)	L 1-2
Sept 13: Charlton (A)	D 0-0

Saints Spotlight

CHAIRS AT ST MARY'S



HONEYMOON PERIOD: George Burley was afforded time to develop Saints – it didn't pay off.



REPLACED: A change of chairman saw the end to Nigel Pearson's time in charge.

Sept 19: Newcastle (H)	L 1-2
Sept 25: Fulham (A)	L 0-1
Oct 2: Man City (H)	D 0-0
Oct 16: Everton (A)	L 0-1
Oct 24: Birmingham (H)	D 0-0
Oct 30: Arsenal (A)	D 2-2
Nov 6: WBA (H)	D 2-2
Nov 13: Portsmouth (H)	W 2-1
Nov 20: Norwich (A)	L 1-2
Nov 27: C Palace (H)	D 2-2
Dec 4: Man Utd (A)	L 0-3

First 10 games	P	W	D	L	Pts
	10	0	5	5	5

Last 10 games	P	W	D	L	Pts
	10	1	5	4	8

HARRY REDKNAPP

In Wigley's place came an appointment that was totally at odds with the decision to make Wigley head coach just a few weeks earlier.

In early December 2004, and only a fortnight after leaving arch rivals Portsmouth, Harry Redknapp was made Saints' third manager of the season.

Redknapp's first 10 games in charge, though, were only marginally more successful than his predecessor.

For all his experience, Redknapp was unable to keep Saints up and suffered what remains the only relegation in his managerial career.



EXPERIMENT: The appointment of Dutchman Jan Poortvliet was a brave move that didn't end well.



STEP UP: Mark Wotte took the top job after being assistant to Jan Poortvliet.

Harry Redknapp's first 10 league games

Dec 11: Middlesbro (H)	D 2-2
Dec 18: Spurs (A)	L 1-5
Dec 26: Charlton (H)	D 0-0
Dec 28: Liverpool (A)	L 0-1
Jan 1: Man City (A)	L 1-2
Jan 5: Fulham (H)	D 3-3
Jan 15: Newcastle (A)	L 1-2
Jan 22: Liverpool (H)	W 2-0
Feb 2: Birmingham (A)	L 1-2
Feb 6: Everton (H)	D 2-2

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	1	5	4	8

Under Redknapp, Saints were hard

to beat in the first few months of the 2005/06 Championship season.

But even with the arrival on the scene of teenage starlet Theo Walcott, Saints never won enough games to force themselves into promotion contention.

Then, in late November, Redknapp sensationally resigned to return to Portsmouth.

Harry Redknapp's last 10 league games

Sept 28: Reading (H)	D 0-0
Oct 1: Preston (A)	D 1-1
Oct 15: Hull (A)	D 1-1
Oct 18: Leeds (A)	L 1-2
Oct 22: Millwall (A)	W 2-0

Oct 29: Stoke (H)	W 2-0
Nov 5: Leicester (A)	D 0-0
Nov 19: Leeds (H)	L 3-4
Nov 22: Hull (A)	D 1-1
Nov 26: Wolves (A)	D 0-0

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	2	6	2	12

GEORGE BURLEY

The appointment of George Burley was that rare beast – a Lowe appointment that went down well with most Saints supporters.

Burley's reputation had been built by taking Ipswich into the Premier League in 2000 and he had since had fairly successful spells with Derby and Hearts.

His start was awful, picking up the same amount of points – five – from his first ten games in charge as Wigley.

But unlike Wigley, at least Burley was afforded a honeymoon period – the only Saints boss of the last decade to get one really.

After selling a raft of players in the January 2006 transfer window and bringing in his own men, it was always going to take Burley some time to get Saints playing the way he wanted.

And so it proved.

George Burley's first 10 games

Dec 26: Watford (A)	L 0-3
Dec 28: Sheff Utd (H)	L 0-1
Dec 31: Cardiff (A)	L 1-2
Jan 2: Brighton (H)	W 2-1
Jan 14: QPR (A)	L 0-1
Jan 21: Ipswich (H)	L 0-2
Jan 25: C Palace (H)	D 0-0
Jan 31: Plymouth (A)	L 1-2
Feb 4: Derby (H)	D 0-0
Feb 10: Reading (A)	L 0-2

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	1	2	7	5

Saints' slide down the Championship table had begun by the time Burley left in January 2008 to take over the Scottish national team.

He had won only one of his last eight league games, and that against a struggling Scunthorpe United side managed by Nigel Adkins.

George Burley's last 10 games

Dec 1: Leicester (A)	W 2-1
Dec 4: Sheff Wed (H)	D 0-0
Dec 8: Hull (H)	W 4-0
Dec 15: Coventry (A)	D 1-1
Dec 22: Preston (H)	L 0-1
Dec 26: Colchester (A)	D 1-1
Dec 29: Barnsley (A)	D 2-2
Jan 1: Watford (A)	L 0-3
Jan 12: Scunthorpe (H)	W 1-0
Jan 19: Plymouth (A)	D 1-1

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	3	5	2	14

NIGEL PEARSON

After Burley's departure, caretakers John Gorman and Jason Dodd lost three out of four in the league and also an FA Cup fifth round tie at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Saints Spotlight

THE MANAGERIAL MADNESS

From page 19

lower division Bristol Rovers.

That heralded Nigel Pearson's arrival at St Mary's.

Another who eventually was to last less than 15 games, Pearson is best remembered for beating Sheffield United in the last game of 2007/08 to keep Saints in the Championship.

Nigel Pearson's 14 games in charge

Feb 19: Plymouth (H)	L 0-2
Feb 23: Scunthorpe (A)	D 1-1
Mar 1: Ipswich (H)	D 1-1
Mar 4: Wolves (A)	D 2-2
Mar 8: Blackpool (A)	D 2-2
Mar 11: Leicester (H)	W 1-0
Mar 15: Hull (A)	L 0-5
Mar 22: Coventry (H)	D 0-0
Mar 29: Cardiff (A)	L 0-1
Apr 5: Bristol City (H)	W 2-0
Apr 12: Charlton (A)	D 1-1
Apr 19: Burnley (H)	L 0-1
Apr 28: WBA (A)	D 1-1
May 4: Sheff Utd (H)	W 3-2

First 10					
P	W	D	L	Pts	
10	2	4	4		10

Last 10					
P	W	D	L	Pts	
10	3	4	3		13

JAN POORTVLIET

With Lowe returning as chairman in May 2008, within days he had released Pearson and brought in Jan Poortvliet.

The Dutchman might have been unknown to most Saints fans, but he had been a World Cup finalist in 1978.

Sadly for Poortvliet and the fans, though, he was proved to be totally out of his depth in the Championship.

He was not helped, though, by having a very young and inexperienced squad foisted on him by the chairman.

Jan Poortvliet's first 10 league games

Aug 9: Cardiff (A)	L 1-2
Aug 16: Birmingham (H)	L 1-2
Aug 23: Derby (A)	W 1-0
Aug 30: Blackpool (H)	L 0-1
Sept 14: QPR (A)	L 1-4
Sept 17: Ipswich (H)	D 2-2
Sept 20: Barnsley (H)	D 0-0
Sept 27: Doncaster (A)	W 2-0
Sept 30: Norwich (H)	W 2-0
Oct 4: Coventry (A)	L 1-4

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	3	2	5	11

Poortvliet's departure from St Mary's came in the wake of a dismal home loss to fellow Championship strugglers Doncaster in mid-January 2009.

Saints only won one of his last 10 games in charge, a run that included another depressing St Mary's setback against lowly Nottingham Forest.



FOR THE CHOP: Despite a successful time in charge both Alan Pardew, left, and Nigel Adkins, right, got the bullet from chairman Nicola Cortese.

Jan Poortvliet's last 10 league games

Nov 25: Plymouth (H)	D 0-0
Nov 29: Charlton (A)	D 0-0
Dec 6: Sheff Wed (H)	D 1-1
Dec 8: C Palace (A)	L 0-3
Dec 13: Burnley (A)	L 2-3
Dec 20: Nottm Forest (H)	L 0-2
Dec 26: Plymouth (A)	L 0-2
Dec 28: Reading (H)	D 1-1
Jan 10: Barnsley (A)	W 1-0
Jan 17: Doncaster (H)	L 1-2

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	1	4	5	7

MARK WOTTE

In Poortvliet's place, with Saints crying out for an experienced manager, Lowe put Wotte in charge instead.

Wotte had been Poortvliet's assistant, leading to claims he had stabbed his friend in the back. After failing to win any of his first four games, Wotte won his next three to raise hopes Saints could avoid the drop.

Mark Wotte's first 10 league games

Jan 27: Norwich (A)	D 2-2
Jan 31: Swansea (H)	D 2-2
Feb 3: Sheff Utd (H)	L 1-2
Feb 14: Bristol City (A)	L 0-2
Feb 21: Preston (H)	W 3-1
Feb 28: Cardiff (H)	W 1-0
Mar 3: Ipswich (A)	W 3-0
Mar 7: Birmingham (A)	L 0-1
Mar 10: Derby (H)	D 1-1
Mar 14: QPR (H)	D 0-0

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	2	4	4	10

Wotte could not keep Saints up, though, and the club's nosedive into administration only added insult to injury.

Mark Wotte's last 10 games

Mar 10: Derby (H)	D 1-1
Mar 14: QPR (H)	D 0-0
Mar 21: Blackpool (A)	D 1-1
Apr 4: Charlton (H)	L 2-3
Apr 7: Watford (A)	D 2-2
Apr 10: Wolves (A)	L 0-3
Apr 13: C Palace (H)	W 1-0
Apr 18: Sheff Wed (A)	L 0-2
Apr 25: Burnley (H)	D 2-2
May 3: Nottm Forest (A)	L 1-3

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	1	5	4	8

ALAN PARDEW

There were no real grumbles from fans when Pardew became the first appointment of the Liebherr reign.

He started badly, though, failing to win any of his first seven league games in charge – something Steve Wigley and Harry Redknapp had also achieved. He was to win only one of his first 10 league games, as Saints struggled in the third tier with a minus 10-point handicap as well.

Alan Pardew's first 10 league games

Aug 8: Millwall (H)	D 1-1
Aug 15: Huddersfield (A)	L 1-3
Aug 18: Swindon (A)	L 0-1
Aug 22: Brentford (H)	D 1-1
Aug 29: Stockport (A)	D 1-1
Sept 5: Colchester (H)	D 0-0
Sept 12: Charlton (A)	D 1-1
Sept 19: Yeovil (H)	W 2-0
Sept 26: Carlisle (A)	D 1-1
Sept 29: Bristol Rov (H)	L 2-3

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	3	5	2	14

10	1	6	3	9
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By the end of his first season in charge, though, Pardew had easily won the Saints fans over.

Not only did Saints finish seventh, a fine effort after their early season woes and points deduction, but they also lifted the JPT at Wembley.

Alan Pardew's last 10 league games

Apr 10: Charlton (H)	W 1-0
Apr 13: Bristol Rov (A)	W 5-1
Apr 17: Yeovil (A)	W 1-0
Apr 20: Oldham (H)	D 0-0
Apr 24: Carlisle (H)	W 3-2
May 1: Gillingham (A)	L 1-2
May 8: Southend (H)	W 3-1

Aug 7: Plymouth (H)	L 0-1
Aug 21: Leyton O (H)	D 1-1
Aug 28: Bristol Rov (A)	W 4-0

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	6	2	2	20

NIGEL ADKINS

An average of two points a game from his last 10 league games in charge was not enough to spare Pardew the axe.

In his place came Nigel Adkins, who had previously twice led Scunthorpe United to promotion from League 1.

After winning just one of his first four league games, Adkins was quickly into a winning run which was eventually to lead to another third tier promotion for him.

Nigel Adkins' first 10 league games

Sep 15: MK Dons (A)	L 0-2
Sep 18: Colchester (H)	D 0-0
Sept 25: Sheff Wed (A)	W 1-0
Sept 28: Yeovil (A)	D 1-1
Oct 2: Bournemouth (H)	W 2-0
Oct 9: Tranmere (H)	W 2-0
Oct 16: Huddersfield (A)	L 0-2
Oct 23: Oldham (H)	W 2-1
Oct 30: Notts Co (A)	W 3-1
Nov 2: Dagenham (H)	W 4-0

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	6	2	2	20

Despite 14 points from his last 10 games – only Pardew among recent Saints bosses had had a better record in the same period – Adkins was sacked just over a week ago.

Nigel Adkins' last 10 league games

Nov 25: Newcastle (H)	W 2-0
Nov 28: Norwich (H)	D 1-1
Dec 1: Liverpool (A)	L 0-1
Dec 8: Reading (H)	W 1-0
Dec 22: Sunderland (H)	L 0-1
Dec 26: Fulham (A)	D 1-1
Dec 29: Stoke (A)	D 3-3
Jan 1: Arsenal (H)	D 1-1
Jan 12: A Villa (A)	W 1-0
Jan 16: Chelsea (A)	D 2-2

P	W	D	L	Pts
10	3	5	2	14

THE PINK AND DIALY ECHO: FIRST FOR SAINTS NEWS AND VIEWS

Saints Spotlight



CAPITAL GAIN: Saints' Jason Punccheon, centre, celebrates after scoring his team's leveller in the 2-2 draw with Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

Learning curve for ex-Saints manager

NEWCASTLE boss Alan Pardew has admitted his job would kill him if he did not enjoy it so much.

The 51-year-old former Saints manager, pictured below, has faced an intensely difficult few months on Tyneside, with his team slipping into the battle for Barclays Premier League survival after a desperate run of results and he has more recently had to deal with Demba Ba's defection to Chelsea, skipper Fabricio Coloccini's request to leave and a January recruitment drive.

However, the last week has brought significant progress on the transfer front and Pardew was able to announce yesterday that the club had managed to persuade Coloccini to stay until at least the end of the current campaign.

Asked how difficult a time he had endured, he replied with a smile: "Every day is a learning experience for me at this football club."

"You have to grow and enjoy it, otherwise it would kill you, so that's what I do, I grow with it and enjoy it. "I know the feeling around is very much about results more than anything, and we need to put that right."

Newcastle will resume league action on Tuesday evening when they travel to fellow strugglers Aston Villa sitting just two points clear of the drop zone and two points behind Saints.

They will do so, however, with four new faces on board after central defender Mapou Yanga-Mbiwa, striker Yoan Gouffran, full-back Massadio Haidara and midfielder Moussa Sissoko joined fellow Frenchman Mathieu Debuchy in heading for St James' Park as transfer window signings.

Eyebrows have been raised at Newcastle's concentration on the French market – they now have 12 Frenchmen in their squad following last night's arrival of Toulouse midfielder Sissoko – with chief scout Graham Carr having established an impressive network of contacts.

Pardew said: "Graham Carr doesn't speak a word of French, so it's amazing that he has done so well there."

"We not only use Graham, but we use his team in France. We have very, very good contacts in France and I think that's probably the main reason that the transfers have come that way."

"But the most important thing is getting good players, and we think the French market is a good market."

MONEY GULF LAID BARE

THE Premier League riches Saints could enjoy have been revealed – but it also underlines just how far they have to go to compete with some of the best teams in the top flight financially.

Deloitte's have released their annual money report in football, this for 2011/12.

When you consider that Chelsea raked in the fifth highest amount of cash in European football it underlines just how fantastic it is for Saints to be able to go to Stamford Bridge and get a draw.

Manchester City are hot on the heels of Arsenal and Chelsea in football's money league.

The reigning Premier League champions, owned by Abu Dhabi-based Sheikh Mansour, saw revenues rise by 51 per cent last year as City climbed five places to seventh on the list, just behind Arsenal and Chelsea.

Real Madrid continue to top the league ahead of Barcelona, while Manchester United stay in third ahead of Bayern Munich despite a small fall in revenue last season.

Austin Houlihan, senior manager in the sports business group

DELOITTE MONEY LEAGUE, REVENUES IN 2011/12

1 Real Madrid	£414.7m (£433m in 2010/11)
2 Barcelona	£390.8m (£407m)
3 Man Utd	£320.3m (£331.4m)
4 Bayern Munich	£298.1m (£290.3m)
5 Chelsea	£261m (£228.6m)
6 Arsenal	£234.9m (£226.8m)
7 Man City	£231.1m (£153.2m)
8 AC Milan	£207.9m (£212m)
9 Liverpool	£188.7m (£183.6m)
10 Juventus	£158.1m (£139m)

at Deloitte, said that City's growth – thanks to Champions League income and the huge new deal with Etihad – was a significant change to the European football landscape.

"Manchester City's Premier League title-winning season combined with participation in the UEFA Champions League, helped drive 51 per cent revenue growth to £231.1m, the largest absolute and relative growth of any Money League club," Houlihan said.

"The club's progress to the top of

the English and European game means that they are set to remain a top-ten Money League club for the foreseeable future, and will look to push on ahead of the two English clubs immediately above them, Arsenal and Chelsea, for a top-five ranking."

Arsenal's revenue last season was £235m, only £4m more than City's, but they have a bumper new £150m sponsorship deal with Emirates to come on stream, plus an expected new kit deal with Nike.

Chelsea's revenue may well fall this season – as Champions League winners they enjoyed a record high in 2012 but have failed to make the knockout stages this campaign.

Deloitte's report added: "Chelsea's feat in becoming the first London club to win the UEFA Champions League allowed it to claim fifth place."

"However, an early exit from European competition this year and capacity constraints of their Stamford Bridge home could see them slip down the Money League next year."

United's hopes of catching the two Spanish giants at the head of the list appear bleak, even though the Premier League's huge new broadcasting deal will take effect from August, and despite the change in the exchange rate being in favour of English clubs.

Although Barcelona and Real Madrid have seen revenues increase when calculated in euros, when converted to pounds sterling both have experienced a drop.

The new Premier League TV deal could see up to half of the 20 clubs on Deloitte's list hail from England in the years to come, with sides on the fringes such as Everton set to see their revenues boosted.

Saints Spotlight

HAD enough of the snow already? If you have, be lucky you don't have to live through any of these winters again – four seasons where snow and ice really had an impact on football.

1946/47

From January 22 there was snow mayhem in the British Isles. In England five-metre drifts were reported – and seven-metre drifts sighted in Scotland.

Villages were cut off, the army had to deliver food to those who'd been stranded and railways were completely blocked.

Snow fell somewhere in the UK every day from the above date to March 17.

And it was ver, very cold, with a temperature of -21C recorded at Woburn in Bedfordshire.

Saints weren't horrendously affected, though.

Snow joke if the



NO GAME: Snow wins the day at The Dell in 1985.

Their main problems came in March 1947 when snow and ice wiped out two consecutive weekend.

The previous month Saints had played Newcastle away in a snowy north east, while on February 22 Saints painted the goalposts green for their game against Luton Town at The Dell, with snow on the pitch.

1962/63

Most of England suffered from snow at regular intervals from Boxing Day 1962 to early March 1963.

Astonishing 20-foot drifts were recorded along with 119mph winds (on the Isle of Man) and bitterly cold temperatures – the mercury plunged to -22C in Braemar, Scotland.

Meanwhile, in January the sea froze for a mile from the shore at Herne Bay in Kent and parts of the Thames iced over to such an extent that people were able to skate on it.

As for Saints, the weather caused havoc.

The club didn't play a Second Division match between Boxing Day and February 23.

The game against Charlton at The Valley was started, but was abandoned due to a blizzard in mid January.

Throw in the fact Saints also reached the FA Cup semi finals that season, and Ted Bates' men had to play 14 league games – a third of their total programme – in April and May.

Continued on facing page



WHERE THERE'S A WILL: Skiing to work in the snow, January 1947, left.



THE WAY THEY WERE: Check out the cars from this 1947 snow scene.



SNOWED UNDER: 1982 – and it's the same old story at The Dell.



SATURDAY FOOTBALL RESULTS - SEE PAGE 48

Saints Spotlight

game's off!



SNOWBALLS: Saints training in the snow on Southampton Common. January, 1979. Right, another dodgy day at The Dell.



Continued from facing page

The last eight games were all shoehorned into the first 22 days of May.

In all, more than 400 English league and cup matches fell victim to the weather and the season had to be extended by a month on both sides of the border.

One FA Cup third-round tie between Coventry and Lincoln eventually took place at the 16th time of asking.

Saints' third round home tie against York was postponed nine times before Saints ran out 5-0 winners on February 13, with the help of a hat-trick from George O'Brien.

Saints went on to play Sheffield United in the fifth round, with United only managing to complete their third round tie after Saints had won in the fourth!

Up in Scotland, Airdrie and Stranraer was postponed 33 times.

1978/79

Saints suffered four postponements in January 1979.

Their FA Cup tie at Wimbledon took place two days late after only three scheduled third round ties were completed on the Saturday.

And their fourth round tie at Preston was also staged on a Monday after being postponed two days earlier.

Due to extended runs in the Cups – Saints reached the League Cup final and the quarter finals of the FA Cup – there was the obvious fixture chaos.

In March Saints played two FA Cup ties against West Bromwich Albion on March 10 and 12 – the replay taking place at The Dell two days after the first game – and two against Arsenal on March 19 and 21.

In between, on March 17, they lost the League Cup final 3-2 to Nottingham Forest.

I wonder what today's Premier League managers would make of that sort of schedule, and what would the police say if they had to cover FA Cup replays with hardly any notice?

There was no let up in April 1979 with Saints playing eight league games that month.

In fact, the season ended with league games on April 21, 24, 28 and 30, and May 2, 5 and 8.

That was seven games in 18 days! North of the border, the Scottish Cup second-round clash between Inverness Thistle and Falkirk was postponed 29 times. Due to be played on January 6, it eventually took place on February 22.

1981/82

The winter of 1981/82 saw the all-time lowest recorded temperature in the UK equalled.

In Braemar, Scotland, it reached a truly shiversome -27.2C.

The last time it had been that cold was in February 1895.

Temperatures even plummeted to -20C in southern England.

The snow started in early December, with Saints playing just one First Division game between December 8 and January 19.

Have you got any good memories of watching Saints in the snow? Email echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

ALL THIS SEASON'S SAINTS STATS - SEE PAGE 14

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

BUDGE Pountney is reeling in the years. Trying to at least.

"Is it really that long ago?" he asks, with obvious incredulity. "I hadn't kept count and I would never have guessed."

But yes, it really is that long ago. This week marked the tenth anniversary of the moment Pountney brought his international career with Scotland to an abrupt and unexpected end when he walked out of a squad training session at Murrayfield, never to return.

Over the four previous years he had collected 31 caps, scored five tries and earned a recognition as one of the finest and most effective loose forwards in world rugby. And suddenly it was all over.

Bar the shouting, of course.

Pountney's departure rocked the cosy and complacent world of Scottish rugby to its foundations and asked searching questions of the SRU's competence as far as the business of looking after professional athletes was concerned.

But while many, not least his fellow players, sympathised with his actions, there were others outside the camp who accused him of petulance, treachery and ingratitude to the country that had turned him into a Test player.

Pountney's route into international rugby had been bizarre.

Born in Southampton, he claimed Scottish qualification through a grandmother from the Channel Islands, although the legal basis for that, in terms of International Rugby Board rules, was distinctly suspect. Yet, from the moment he made his Scotland debut – against South Africa in 1998, he played with a commitment and fiery purpose that rendered his background irrelevant as far as most Scottish fans were concerned.

Historic win

He had been involved in all Scotland's matches as they won the last-ever Five Nations Championship in 1999. The following year, he had won the Heineken Cup with Northampton.

The next few years had ups and downs for the national team, but at the dawn of 2003 they looked to be in good shape, after five wins from their last six games and an autumn clean sweep that included an historic win against the Springboks at Murrayfield.

But, as far as Pountney was concerned, those wins had simply papered over some critical cracks in Scotland's way of doing things.

Having seen how professional clubs in England had begun to look after their players, he thought Scotland was still stuck in the dark ages of amateurism. There were issues over kit, nutrition, accommodation and the treatment of wives and partners. Taken one by one, the problems might look trivial; but the frustration was building inside Pountney.

It erupted midway through a harsh training day at Murrayfield.

"We came off the pitch after a pretty full-on session," he explains. "The recovery food we were getting was a dodgy old ham roll and a bit of soup. We had just flogged ourselves silly for two and a half hours out there."

"I don't have a problem with working hard on the training pitch. That's what you have to do at international level, it's part of



Budge Pountney carries the fight to France in the Six Nations Championship.



Budge Pountney with a Waterbabies class in 2007

the job. But to go back out for another two and a half hours on the back of a ham roll and a bowl of soup just seemed absurd.

"To put all that effort in when people behind the scenes were doing so little made zero sense to me.

"So, essentially, it was a culmination of things. It was very much the final straw that broke the camel's back for me.

"I talked to the coaches in Northampton that afternoon. I talked to my dad. I spoke to [Scotland coach] Ian McGeechan and I spoke to some of the senior players.

"They all knew the situation. I had just had enough."

His departure inevitably drew comparisons with Roy Keane's walkout from the Irish football squad at the previous year's World Cup in Japan. However, Pountney's actions were more measured and more considered.

Senior Murrayfield figures drew attention to the fact he had lost a testicle after a horrific injury a few weeks earlier, suggest-

ing that his judgement was affected, but Pountney denies that that incident had any effect on his thinking.

"Those comments were pretty crap," he says. "Anyone who knows me will say that injuries don't affect me that way. On top of which, I carried on playing for Northampton."

"We simply weren't being given the right kind of back-up to make us play as well as we could.

"That's all there was to it."

Commitment

He is more scathing still about those who questioned his commitment to Scotland, or hinted that he had been a carpet-bagger interested only in himself.

"Anyone who wrote that kind of rubbish clearly didn't know the first thing about me, didn't understand my passion for Scotland and for playing for Scotland."

By Alan

"When we was finger-painted, I didn't love it."

So what happened?

Ironically, Murrayfield's ending injury in a pre-season.

He moved Franklin's coach and the next two years.

"I loved absolutely all about football."

"It was a experience to be bly didn't no."

"All of a s blokes I had."

"It opened works, but it as well and."

"My wife wanted to do on."

"Something things."

In one of moves ever, the world of switched over taking on a with Water that teaches."

"It was a admits. "We years ago and grown."

"We teach so it's a big."

"I don't do."

"I've prett pool and I'm"

D

"We have staff and it teaching and teaches beca."

Pountney now is as an discipline games and l."

"It keeps explains. "I shortly for under-20."

"It will be game to wat."

However, Twickenham their Murra."

"I've told a red rose o."

"I've aske the Thistle, happen."

"I'm still Scotland bo Gregor Tow lucky, and I."

"It is unfor did, but I do."

"I still beli the time, bu."

"When I remarkably the first pla."

DE FOR RUGBY LEGEND

Scotland star at home in Forest

David Reid

lost a game all you would get pointing, with people saying we the shirt or whatever."

happened next?

seven months after he left Pountney suffered a career-ry when he damaged an ankle son game with Northampton.

swiftly into coaching at the Gradians club, becoming head then director of rugby over the ars. And then he quit again.

the playing side of rugby, adored it, but that's what it was r me," he recalls.

ood experience, but it was expe- director of rugby, but I proba- eed it at that time.

udden, I was stuck in charge of I been playing rugby with.

l my eyes up to how business t was a great way to lose friends I didn't want to do that.

Ali and I made the decision we o something different and move

ng different" is understating

the most improbable career

Pountney turned his back on f battle-hardened bruisers and ver to bobbing babies instead, a franchise in the New Forest Babies, a nationwide company s babies and toddlers to swim.

bit of a culture change," he e set it up about five and a half nd it has grown and grown and

about a thousand kids a week operation.

much teaching anymore.

y much taken myself out of the n now looking at the business.

Discipline issues

about nine teachers and admin s almost impossible to do the d run the business, but Ali still ause she loves doing it."

s sole connection with rugby RFU citing officer, looking into ssues at Aviva Premiership beyond.

me in the loop a little bit," he love it. I'm off to Sicily quite Italy under-20 versus France

a nice place to go and a good ch."

he is almost as wary of n officials as he once was of yfield counterparts.

them I don't want a blazer with n it," he laughs.

d if he could give me one with but I don't think that's going to

in touch with a lot of the oys, guys like Tom Smith and nsend and Scott Murray. I was made some really great friends. rtunate that it ended the way it on't regret what I did.

ieve I made the right decision at I don't dwell on it.

look back, I still think I was blessed to have the chance in ce."

DIFFERENT WORLDS: Scotland captain Budge Pountney hoists the Century Quaich after a Five Nations victory against Ireland, top right. Above: Budge Pountney (with his dog Murphy) pictured this month near his New Forest home, on the eve of this year's RBS Six Nations Championships.



Did You Know?

BRADFORD booked their place at Wembley with victory over Aston Villa in the Capital One Cup semi-finals on Tuesday and are now one victory from one of the most unlikely sporting triumphs of all time.

The Bantams could be backed at 2000/1 ahead of the first round and were 20/1 outsiders before the first leg against Villa.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at some of sport's other great surprises.

SUTTON STUN COVENTRY

Coventry had beaten Tottenham to win the FA Cup for the only time in their history in 1987 but two years later they were the victim of one of the cup's great upsets. Sutton had only been promoted to the Conference in 1986 but won the third-round tie 2-1 thanks to goals from Tony Rains and Matthew Hanlan. They remain the last non-league side to beat top-flight opposition.

THE RAGAMUFFIN MAN PROVES HIS WORTH

Welterweight king Don Curry barely knew who Lloyd Honeyghan was before taking on the British fighter in Atlantic City in September 1986, asking: "Who is this ragamuffin?" Honeyghan was not considered in remotely the same class but he pounded Curry, an unbackable favourite before the fight, into submission at the end of the sixth round, earning himself a world title. From then on he was known as the Ragamuffin Man.

WILD CARD WINS WIMBLEDON

Goran Ivanisevic had reached three Wimbledon finals, losing once to Andre Agassi and twice to Pete Sampras, but by 2001 he was well past his best and dogged by a shoulder injury. His ranking had fallen to 125 and he needed a wild card to play at Wimbledon. He beat Carlos Moya, Andy Roddick, Marat Safin and Tim Henman to reach the final, where, through tears, he eventually clinched a five-set win over Pat Rafter. It was the last title of Ivanisevic's career.

THE MIRACLE OF MILAN

Diego Maradona had led Argentina to World Cup glory in 1986 and they were expected to open the defence of their title in Italy four years later with a comfortable victory over Cameroon. But it turned into one of the tournament's most memorable upsets as Francois Oman-Biyik's goal earned the Indomitable Lions a 1-0 victory. Cameroon's approach was extremely physical, particularly towards Maradona, and they held on despite having two men sent off. They eventually lost to England in the quarter-finals.

FOINAVON WINS THE NATIONAL

Irish racehorse Foinavon went into the 1967 Grand National as a 100/1 outsider of whom so little was expected that his owner, Cyril Watkins, did not even attend the race. He emerged as one of the National's most surprising and famous winners after the rest of the field were involved in a melee at the 23rd fence and were unable to recover. The fence was officially named after Foinavon in 1984.

Bradford City's journey to the Capital One Cup

FROM THE CO-OP

Simon Carter

simon.carter@dailyecho.co.uk

SPORTS EDITOR

HE was working as a shelf stacker at his local Co-op a few years ago.

It sounds like the opening line of a famous song by the Human League over 30 years ago.

And like the waitresses in a cocktail bar who went on to find fame and fortune at the top of the pop charts, so life has turned full circle for the man who was a Co-op employee in Yorkshire.

Earlier this week James Hanson headed the goal that sent fourth division Bradford City to a sensational League Cup final appearance.

There is far too much hyperbole in football, there really is.

We talk about the 'disaster' of losing a game, or the 'sensational' goal which was really just a very good strike.

When real disasters and sensations come around, as a result we tend to be lost for words.

Well, accuse me of sensationalism if you must, but a fourth division club reaching a major cup final is as sensational as you can get.

In these days of Premier League clubs being awash with cash, how lovely it was to see a squad pieced together for under £100,000 beat Wigan, Arsenal and Aston Villa to reach the Capital One Cup final.

As a result, Bradford became the first fourth tier team to reach a major cup final at Wembley as they clinched a place in their first showpiece final since 1911.

How equally lovely to see, just 24 hours later, another underdog join Bradford in the final.

Chelsea's £300m outlay on their current squad was not enough for them to even score a goal in two legs against a Swansea side who cost around one-tenth of their far more glamorous opponents.

And Chelsea's attempt to reach Wembley ended in acrimony with a pathetic kick at a ballboy by one of the London club's multi-million pound superstars.

I bet you James Hanson would never kick a ball boy.

I bet James Hanson would never 'do a Luis Suarez' and admit he dived in a bid to win a penalty.

I bet he will never cut his hair in a bizarre fashion in



a bid to make headlines with a 'look at me!' attitude.

"Three years ago I was working in the Co-op while playing non-league for Guiseley, so it's days like this why you want to be a professional," Hanson said after Tuesday's game at Villa Park.

"I was just enjoying play-

ing non-league and scoring goals.

"You get paid quite good money and I was working as well, it was quite a good lifestyle.

"But you always want to play as high as you can and thankfully Stuart McCall (then manager) at Bradford gave me a chance and I've

not looked back since.

"It just shows if you keep working hard then anything can happen.

"To score a goal to take us to Wembley is unbelievable."

That is undoubtedly true. It is all too easy at times to criticise Premier League footballers, but we should-

n't tar them all with the same brush.

Look at Rickie Lambert. Like Hanson, he has worked in what many would suggest is a dead-end job.

In Lambert's case, he once worked in a factory putting lids on jars of beetroot.

Now he is being talked

CONTACT US - EMAIL: echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

final is the very reason we all love football

TO THE CUP FINAL



about as an England international.

Look at Grant Holt. Now in his second season as a Premier League striker, he once worked in a food factory in Barrow.

That sounds as far away from the glamour and glitz of the self-styled 'greatest league in the world' as it's

possible to get.

Like Hanson, both Lambert and Holt have played in the lower divisions in front of crowds of under 2,000.

Lambert and Holt played for the same Rochdale team managed by Steve Parkin.

The same Steve Parkin who is now Bradford City's

assistant manager.

It is great to see the success enjoyed by Lambert and Holt in recent years, for they know what life is like on the other side of the fence.

Not enough Premier League footballers do, that is the problem.

Andy Warhol famously

once said that 'everyone will be famous for 15 minutes.'

This is James Hanson's quarter of an hour in the spotlight, and hopefully he will enjoy it to the full.

Same with the rest of his Bantams colleagues.

They will never know moments like this again.



WHAT A SHOCKER: Clockwise from left, Bradford players celebrate their Capital One Cup win over Aston Villa; Boss Phil Parkinson and Steve Parkin get into the spirit; James Hanson celebrates; and Hanson heads in a crucial goal for Bradford.



Some of them might end up playing in the Premier League and reaching cup finals again, but that won't be as big a shock as this.

How can it be?

There are no big time charlies in the Bradford side, no former Premier League mercenaries.

There certainly were some big names and big earners when Bradford spent two years in the Premier League between 1999-2001.

The likes of Stan Collymore, Benito Carbone, Dean Saunders, Lee Sharpe and ex-Saint Dan Petrescu.

Some of those earned large salaries and a few years later, as Bradford started to slide down the leagues, those wages contributed to some major financial problems.

It is a different story at Valley Parade these days.

The City team contain journeymen pros such as veteran Gary Jones, who Saints fans might remember scoring when Rochdale won 2-0 at St Mary's in a third division game in September 2010.

Yes, not that long ago, was it?

"A fourth tier team getting to Wembley is quite incredible," Jones said.

"To beat three Premier League teams along the way, and to beat Aston Villa over two legs, words can't describe it.

"You've got to dream about winning it, why not? Who would have expected us to have come this far?"

"I was emotional at the full-time whistle because things like this don't happen every day.

"It'll probably never happen ever again in this competition.

"We've got to savour the moment and then we've got a league game on Saturday, Wycombe at home! It's a bit of a come down."

Did You Know

Aston Villa v ROTHERHAM (LOST)1961

In the first ever League Cup final it was Division Two Rotherham who took a 2-0 lead into the second leg. However, Villa proved too strong in the return at Villa Park, winning 3-0 after extra-time.

NORWICH v ROCHDALE, 1962

Division Four Dale were up against it after a 3-0 defeat at home in the first leg, and despite a host of early efforts in the return they lost 1-0 as the Canaries ended any hopes of a shock result.

QPR (WON) v West Brom, 1967

Division Three QPR stunned a crowd of 100,000 as they beat top flight West Brom 3-2 in the first League Cup final to be held at Wembley.

SWINDON (WON) v Arsenal, 1969

Division Three side Swindon defied the odds, beating top flight Arsenal 3-1 after extra-time. It was a good season for the Robins, as well as this cup success they also secured promotion.

Tottenham v ASTON VILLA (LOST) 1971

Division Three Villa were unlucky to lose to high flying Tottenham. Villa outplayed their opponents for most of the match, but two Martin Chivers goals were enough for the First Division side to lift the trophy

ASTON VILLA v NORWICH 1975

Villa returned to the final for the fourth time and beat fellow Division Two side Norwich 1-0 in a season where both teams earned promotion to the top flight.

Liverpool v WEST HAM (LOST)1981

Division Two side West Ham took Liverpool to a replay with a 1-1 draw - but the Anfield club eventually won the cup with a 2-1 victory.

Nottingham Forest v OLDHAM (LOST), 1990

Division Two Oldham were beaten by Forest 1-0 in what was a close encounter. The Latics were on the up though - and the following year they made sure of promotion to the inaugural Premier League.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (WON) v Manchester United, 1991

Second Division Wednesday's 1-0 victory over United was the last time a team outside the top flight won either of the two major domestic cups.

Liverpool v BOLTON (LOST)1995

Despite losing 2-1 to Liverpool, the Trotters finished the season being promoted to the Premier League.

Chelsea v MIDDLESBROUGH (LOST) 1998

Division One side Middlesbrough took Premier League Chelsea to extra-time, where they eventually lost 2-0. Boro were promoted at the end of the season.

Leicester v TRANMERE (LOST), 2000

In the last League Cup final to be played at the old Wembley Stadium, second tier Tranmere lost 2-1 to Premier League Leicester.

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SOUTHERN
Daily Echo

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RESULTS



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Mrs J Greenwood-Winn, Southampton, Hants
Mr R Haywood, Eastleigh, Hants
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Daily Echo

Non-league Action

FA Vase fourth round: Bemerton HH 3 Blackfield & Langley 2

BLACKFIELD SUNK BY YOUNG'S LATE SHOW

Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

BLACKFIELD & Langley's FA Vase dream ended in a 3-2 defeat in a pulsating all-Sydenhams Premier tie at Bemerton Heath this afternoon.

Having come back from 2-0 down, Ashley Vickers' Watersiders were sunk by a dramatic Danny Young winner in the third of ten minutes' stoppage time.

With winger Ekow Elliott providing a good outlet for Blackfield, much of the early part of the game took place in the Bemerton half until, with nine minutes gone, Harlequins made headway down the right and visiting keeper Steve Mowthorpe had to be alert to gather Jack Slade's overhead cross from the by-line.

Joe Sanger then powered down the left and delivered a dangerous cross for Young, who failed to make full contact with his shot.

Blackfield responded when Dom Allen found Elliott unmarked on the right of the area but, although he managed to squeeze the ball past keeper Grant Porter from a tight angle, it ran harmlessly across the goal face.

It was Bemerton who took the lead in the 19th minute courtesy of skipper Slade.

Sanger played in SLADE, who made his way towards the right of the area before balancing himself and firing a superb low shot past Mowthorpe into the far corner.

Elliott's nifty footwork took him past two Bemerton defenders in the 25th minute, but he couldn't find a finish to match the quality of his approach work.

The game took a double twist on the half-hour with two goals in the space of a minute.

The Harlequins doubled their advantage when Ollie Roe's high ball into the box was dropped by Mowthorpe and YOUNG capitalised with a close-range finish.

But, Blackfield replied in a matter of seconds when Dave Ewen collected the ball from Elliott on the right and delivered into the six-yard box for ALLEN to fire high into the roof



ARM'S LENGTH: Eastleigh's Craig McAllister holds off Farnborough captain Alan Inns. The Spitfires went on to win the Blue Square Conference South contest 3-1. Echo picture by Paul Collins Order no: 15812687

of the net.

With the game remarkably open, Alex Baldacchino had a couple of one-on-ones for Blackfield and, on the stroke of half-time, Kev Gibbens shot on to the top of the unguarded Bemerton net after Porter had come charging out of goal.

The Watersiders made most of the running at the start of the second half, but their momentum was checked when two of their defenders, Mike and Joe Byrne, clashed heads and required lengthy treatment. Both eventually resumed play sporting bandages and a change of shirt.

Blackfield picked up where they had left off, camping in the home half. But the Harlequins defended manfully and did well to block Allen's venomous blast after he had

been set up by Gibbens' by-line cross.

On 70 minutes Bemerton withdrew the tiring Sanger and brought on the fresh legs of Dan Bowman. Blackfield followed suit five minutes later, replacing Allen with wideman Paul Preston.

The visitors mounted a dangerous break in the 76th minute with Baldacchino scampering away and searching out Jake Rowley with a cross-field pass. But the quick-thinking Porter beat the mid-fielder to the ball as he raced to the corner of his area.

As the game suddenly opened up, Kane O'Keefe threatened for the Harlequins before Mowthorpe did well to beat away Eddie Perrett's fierce angled shot.

Baldacchino then came close to an

equaliser at the other end, but Porter pushed his low shot away, diving to his left.

Another couple of injury stoppages again slowed the game down, but it was the Harlequins who settled the quicker and twice came close to extending their lead through Slade and Young.

Instead it was Blackfield who set up a thrilling finale by equalising in the first minute of stoppage time.

Preston crossed from the left and it was fellow substitute BEN'yela NGWA who fired his side level.

But the Watersiders' bubble was quickly burst when, just two minutes later, BOWMAN's corner was flicked on by Slade and there was YOUNG waiting in the six-yard box to belt home the winner.

Sweet 16 for 'Port

FA VASE FOURTH ROUND
Newport IoW 2 Brighouse Tn 1

TWO goals in 90 seconds mid-way through the second half by Tom McInnes sent Newport into the last 16 of the FA Vase at the expense of Yorkshiremen Brighouse Town, writes MIKE VIMPANY.

Trailing 1-0 at half-time, Newport were second best for large periods of an entertaining cut-and-thrust fourth-round tie, but the McInness, pictured below, brace turned the match on its head to give the Islanders an against-the-odds 2-1 win.

Newport began brightly, with Giancarlo Giancovich influential – the beach international forcing a fine save from visiting



goalkeeper Tom Taylor with an ambitious overhead kick and then setting up a chance for Alek Przespolewski.

But Brighouse gradually began to impose themselves on the heavy surface and twice man-of-the-match Gary Streeter made fine saves.

It was no surprise when, mid-way through the first half, Brighouse took the lead through EARNEST BOAFO.

Brighouse bossed it after that, with Newport relieved to be only one goal adrift at the break.

The Yorkshire visitors continued to enjoy the upper hand in the second half, with Streeter twice making fine saves.

With 15 minutes left Newport did not look like saving it – but two McInnes goals in quick succession turned the match upside-down.

Newport suddenly upped their game and equalised when McINNES turned in a low cross from substitute Ryan Oatley to make it 1-1.

It was Newport's first shot for over an hour.

With their very next attack, Newport snatched the winner – Przespolewski threading a ball down the right channel and McINNES stealing in to score at the near post.

Newport clung on for dear life after that, with Streeter making a magnificent finger-tip save to clinch a remarkable victory.

Barfoot rescues Totton

EVOSTIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
PREMIER

AFC Totton 2 St Neots Town 1

TOTTON had keeper Gareth Barfoot to thank as they defied a late St Neots rally before claiming all three points at the Testwood Stadium.

The Stags had an early scare on six minutes when Dan Jacobs' cross to the far post was volleyed over from close range by the unmarked Ben Mackey.

But, as the half wore on, Totton

began to dominate and a succession of Mike Gosney corners saw Richard Gillespie bring out timely stops from St Neots keeper Jack Giddens.

The deadlock was broken six minutes before the break when Gillespie was brought down rounding Giddens and GOSNEY drove the resultant spot kick into the right-hand corner.

Then, just two minutes into the second period, the lead was doubled as BAILY CARGILL'S deflected drive



from just inside the area flew in past Giddens.

St Neots efforts to get back into the game were rewarded on 72 minutes when MACKAY scored from the spot after Ross Bottomley was penalised for his heavy challenge on Adrian Fear.

And as the visitors pushed forward in search of an equaliser, Barfoot was forced to pull off a series of fine saves in the home goal.

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Non-league Football

Non-league News

Matt Le Tissier Q&A
WINCHESTER City are hosting an evening with two Saints legends on Thursday, March 14 at the Holiday Inn, Winchester.

The two men in question are Dell favourites Matt Le Tissier, pictured right, and Mark Dennis.

Tickets cost £45, including a three-course meal, a comedian, race night and auction.

If you are interested or want to find out more contact Paul McCarthy (07867 808767) or Bernie McCarthy (07884 225611).



Craig extends stay
FORMER Eastleigh, Farnborough and Havant & Waterlooville defender Craig Braham-Barrett has signed an extension to his stay at the Blue Square Bet Premier club Macclesfield

Town. The 24-year-old full-back has impressed since his arrival in the summer from Paul Doswell's, pictured, Sutton United. He has been almost ever present in the Macclesfield side, playing more than 30 games in all competitions already.

Club gong for Solent
TEAM Solent have won the Sydenhams One club-of-the-month award for December.

The Southampton Solent University side won all three of last month's league games, beating Ringwood, Amesbury and Laverstock & Ford to keep their promotion quest on track.

The Sydenhams Premier prize goes to Ian Chalk's, pictured, Bemerton Heath Harlequins, who enjoyed an unbeaten December in the league, beating Christchurch and drawing with Alton and Downton.



DARNTON HOPING BLASTS FROM PAST CAN FIRE TOWN

VERWOOD Town coach Andy Darnton is hoping three of his old Romsey charges can help the Potterne Park club through a busy end to their debut Sydenhams Premier season.

The Potters have already dual-signed defender Jamie Thoroughgood from Southern One Central club Guildford City and now have the Long brothers, Jake and Ryan, in their sights, *writes WENDY GEE.*

Thoroughgood – one of Guildford's longest serving and most popular players – moved down to the south coast to study and proved to be something of a hidden gem for Romsey last season, playing 30 games for the side that finished a fine eighth in the Wessex Premier.

He is back playing for Guildford on Saturdays, but still spends the week down south and should be available to Verwood for midweek games.

"I've been chasing Jamie for a number of months now," revealed Darnton. "He's been playing for Guildford, but he's down here training to be a doctor and will be available to us in midweek, which is good because we've got so many games coming up."

"He's got Southern League pedigree which will be a stabilising factor for our youngsters and he'll help cover for the loss of our skipper Matt Delaney who has left a big gap since moving to America."

Verwood have lodged seven days' notice of approach for left-back Jake Long, who has barely featured for league rivals Blackfield & Langley since joining them from Romsey during the summer.

Work commitments have limited Long's availability this term, but Darnton is hopeful he will soon have more time on his hands.

"With his head on, Jake is one of the best left-backs in this league," he said.

Older brother Ryan is also highly-rated, but the former Gosport

Borough striker's career has been stop-start since banging in 17 league goals for Romsey last term.

He too switched to Blackfield during the summer and then signed back on for Romsey only to disappear after just one outing for Danny Barker's side.

"Jamie (Thoroughgood) asked Ryan to go to Guildford with him and he played a couple of games up there," said Darnton.

"Ryan's well capable of Southern League football, in fact he should be playing in the Conference."

"We're putting seven days' notice of approach in to Romsey for him and, once that goes through, hopefully he'll play for us when it suits him and when he's fit."

With centre-forward Mike Haskell still waiting to start a four-match suspension following a Sunday football sending-off, Verwood have taken a chance on 6ft 2in powerhouse Gerald Moore who hails from north London.

"Gerald's on a work secondment at the BAT site where I'm working," Darnton explained.

"He's a big, quick centre-forward who's been playing local senior football in north London."

"Hopefully he can be an impact player for us. He's a unit and he's got a bit about him."

"We've been limited on numbers and signing him and Jamie Thoroughgood adds a bit more strength to the squad."

"We've got three six-pointers coming up against Romsey (today), New Milton (February 2) and Alton (February 6). If we win them we'll be looking at mid-table respectability. But if we lose them we'll be right in among it down there. The next few days could determine our season."

● Bookings are now being taken for Verwood Town's presentation evening at the Carlton Hotel, Bournemouth, on Saturday, May 4. The evening costs £20 per person. Please contact the club for more information.



IN VERWOOD'S SIGHTS: Ryan Long, right.

Mills ditched by Eastleigh

UTILITY man Leigh Mills has been released by Eastleigh after just four months at the Silverlake Stadium.

The former Swindon Town and Tottenham Hotspur centre-back/midfielder was signed shortly after Richard Hill took over at the helm of the Blue Square Bet South club in September.

The 24-year-old joined the Spitfires from Winchester City where he had been a key member of their Sydenhams Premier title-winning team last term.

Mills has made ten starts for the

Spitfires – eight of them in the league – and was praised by Hill for his versatility.

But Eastleigh are now well stocked in the central defensive department following the signings of Chris Todd, Dean Beckwith and Luton Town loan man Alex Lacey, and Mills's unavailability for daytime training may well have worked against him.

Meanwhile Eastleigh midfielder/frontman Chris Flood has had his loan at BSB South rivals Maidenhead United extended.

Flood has so far made 14 starts for the Magpies, scoring twice, and his deal will keep him at York Road until the end of the season.

A former Winchester, Salisbury and Crawley player, Flood joined Eastleigh from Dorchester Town in November 2011.

He was transfer-listed by Hill's predecessor Ian Baird during the summer and had made just four league appearances off the bench this term prior to joining Maidenhead on an initial month's loan in October.



SHORT STAY: Leigh Mills.

SEE BACK PAGE FOR TODAY'S NON-LEAGUE RESULTS

Non-league Football



Pacquette snapped up by Sutton

STRIKER Richard Pacquette has signed for Sutton United after the briefest of Blue Square Bet South stays with Eastleigh.

The well-travelled Dominican international, who turns 30 on Monday, arrived at the Silverlake Stadium on non-contract terms from Bromley in mid-December after the Spitfires had missed out on the signature of Reece Connolly

from Aldershot Town.

With the weather playing havoc with fixtures, he made just two appearances for Eastleigh, scoring one goal at Salisbury, before being shipped out again to free up cash for new defensive signings Chris Todd, Dean Beckwith and loanee Alex Lacey.

Welcoming Pacquette, pictured left, to Gander Green Lane, Sutton's

former Eastleigh boss Paul Doswell said: "Richard's an experienced goalscorer who has had a number of clubs. He could be seen as a bit of a hired gun, but maybe that's what we need."

"He's an excellent finisher of chances and has a scoring record this season with Bromley and Eastleigh that none of our strikers can match."

Non-league News

New deal for ex-Saint
EX-SAINTS striker Martin Foyle has been offered a new deal to stay on as manager of mid-table Blue Square Bet Premier club Hereford United.

Salisbury-born Foyle, pictured below, arrived in the summer on a 12-month deal with his assistant Andy Porter. Now the pair have now been offered contract extensions to remain at Edgar Street.

"We've faced a lot of challenges, and we've had to muck in and get our hands dirty, but that's what we enjoy," said Foyle, who grew up in Saints youth team and made 13 appearances for the club in the early 80s.



Just married ...

JUSTIN Bennett, the Southern Premier Division's joint leading marksman, will be giving defences a breather next month.

The Gosport Borough sharpshooter, below, is getting married and will miss the majority of February on honeymoon.

With 17 League/League Cup goals to his name, Bennett is on level pegging with AFC

Totton's Richard Gillespie in the race for the Southern Premier golden boot.

His absence is not ideal for a Borough side who have strung together 13 games unbeaten in the league and are looking to push for a play-off spot.

Gosport, though, have high hopes for Dan Wooden, who has been converted into a striker after joining the club as a wideman/full-back from Moneyfields four years ago.



WESSEX STRIKERS GET THE THUMBS UP

Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

THERE has been rich praise in recent weeks for three of the Sydenhams Premier Division's most dynamic, young sharpshooters.

When it comes to choosing the best strike pairing around, Blackfield & Langley co-assistant manager Glenn Burnett reckons Bemerton's 'SAS' strike force of Jack Slade and Joe Sanger would "win hands down."

And in Alresford joint manager Danny Robinson's book, Totton & Eling's 20-year-old pace machine Craig Feeney possesses "the goalscoring ability and movement to be a top player."

Small wonder then that GE Hamble co-manager Dave Lewis was feeling doubly pleased with his side after beating Bemerton (2-0 away) and Totton & Eling (4-0 home) in successive games - without so much as conceding a goal.

"I read what Alresford said in the Sports Pink last week about what a good player Craig Feeney is and I totally agree," said Lewis.

"I'm a big admirer of Craig's and have been for two years."

"For me, he's the best player there is coming through at any club right now."

"But when we played Totton & Eling, we kept Craig quiet and it was the same the previous Saturday at Bemerton when we dealt with Slade, Sanger (a sub) and the fella that plays in Sanger's place."

"When we make teams like that look awful, the players come off the pitch thinking 'they're rubbish', but that's not the case."

"It just means that when we do our job properly, we can make sides look ordinary."

"It's not that Bemerton or Totton & Eling played poorly, we just didn't



SHOOTING STARS: Craig Feeney, Jack Slade, inset top, and Joe Sanger, inset above.

allow them to play well.

"If we're on our game we can take a team out of their comfort zone and then play to our strengths."

"It doesn't always work but, when it does, we're formidable."

Lewis also believes that superior fitness has given Hamble an edge in recent weeks.

While many clubs have struggled to train during the wet and frozen weather, the Planemakers have always found a way to keep themselves ticking over.

"Our lads stayed really committed to football over the Christmas period," said Lewis.

"We've used Victoria Country Park, the beach and have had some good five-a-side sessions at our ground."

"We've been in a better physical place than our opponents, coupled with the ability we've got."

"We've had Rory Williams back on the left and Nick Watts has been tremendous on the other side."

"And up front the partnership of Alex Sheath and Ashley Jarvis is working really well, just like it did when Ash played alongside Jamie Musselwhite (now Sholing)."

"We've got our 'Batman and Robin' back, only with a different Batman!"

Williams's impending move to Gosport Borough (see story on page 37) will be a blow to Hamble and Lewis openly admits the wideman is "irreplaceable."

But he said: "Our reserve manager Dave Herbert is doing an outstanding job bringing players through and it's inevitable you will lose players at the top end like Jamie (Musselwhite) and now Rory."

"We've got to use that to our advantage by putting it out there that if young players are prepared to come here and work for it, we can help them go higher up the pyramid."

NON-LEAGUE STORY TO TELL? CALL WENDY GEE ON 023 8042 4483

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Ex-Spitfire joins rivals
FORMER Eastleigh loanee defender Alex Grant has switched camps to Blue Square Bet South rivals Havant & Waterlooville.

The young left-back, who celebrated his 19th birthday this week, has agreed a month's loan with the Hawks from parent club Portsmouth.

H&W boss Lee Bradbury, pictured, hopes he can follow in the footsteps of fellow

Pompey youngster Dan Butler who impressed in a recent stay at Westleigh Park before being recalled by the League One club.

Grant – an English-born Australian – made his professional debut for Portsmouth against Plymouth Argyle before joining Eastleigh on loan just prior to Christmas. But weather interruptions meant he was restricted to just one appearance for Richard Hill's men at Salisbury City on New Year's Day.

Gong time for Delano?
BASINGSTOKE Town striker Delano Sam-Yorke, pictured below, is among the main contenders to win the 2012 Gazette Sports Personality of the Year Award.

And Camrose boss Jason Bristow believes he would be a worthy winner of the competition run by the Sports Pink sister paper The (Basingstoke) Gazette.

"Delano had a good year and was instrumental in our run to the play-offs last season," said Bristow.

"When he's on form and fit, he's one of the best strikers in the league.

"His nomination for the award is well deserved and I hope everybody gets behind him and votes.

"I don't think anyone from the club has won before, so it would be great if Delano could do it."

AUSTIN & PHILLIPS A FINE PAIR

Barker hails strike combo

MANAGER Danny Barker is backing his 'big man, small man' strike combination to fire Romsey Town to Sydenhams Premier Division safety.

Between them the Bassett-based dynamic duo of Matt Austin and Danny Phillips have weighed in with some valuable goals to help hoist the Bypass boys off the foot of the table, *writes WENDY GEE.*

Romsey still have a long way to go to ensure top-flight survival, but if the 23-year-old former Sholing and Riverside double act keep performing as they are, Barker, pictured right, is confident the only way is up in 2013.

With Austin scoring twice and Phillips once, Romsey arguably pulled off the result of the season earlier this month, shocking the then league leaders Downton 3-1 at Wick Lane.

And they got another priceless point in the bag the following midweek at AFC Portchester where Austin struck again in a 1-1 draw.

"I've known Matt for quite a few years. He played for me at Bishop's Waltham," Barker explained.

"Like quite a few of our players, he and Danny have come in from lower league football and are adapting really well to the Wessex. "The two of them have forged a good partnership up front and they complement each other well.

"Danny's smaller and very pacy, whereas Matt's more of a biggish battering ram type of centre-forward. It's a big man, small man combination.

"We've changed our style a bit and, since they partnered up, it's no coincidence we've been getting results.

"The lads we've brought into the club are all unknowns with very good futures ahead of them.

"I've no doubt that in a couple of years' time I'll lose a few of them to higher clubs, but that's football. I believe in pushing players on."

Throwing December victories over Hayling United and Fawley AFC into the equation, Romsey have won three and drawn one of their last six league games – a far cry from their earlier struggles when they lost 17 of their opening 18 fixtures.

"We probably surprised a few people with that result at Downton, but we played really well to be fair," said Barker.

"We've certainly set some standards now and given ourselves a real chance.

"I think we've got a good chance of staying up, I really do.

"The bottom line is that we've won three and drawn one of the last six which is a whole different story to where we were."

Salisbury on the move

SALISBURY City have announced plans to move their youth academy to the top-of-the-range facilities at Old Sarum.

The youth set-up is currently affiliated with Sparsholt College, Winchester, but, from September, the club will be running a full-time course aimed at 16 to 19-year-olds who want to pursue a career with Blue Square Bet South leaders, writes Joel Holt.

The Salisbury City FC football studies course at Sarum Academy will enable students to use the first-class education and sport facilities on offer.

SCFC's head of youth development Michael Cooper has been in the

process of restructuring the youth system for more than a year and the club now have 17 different age-groups playing in leagues across the south.

Cooper said: "When I rejoined the club in 2011 I looked at the youth development and saw a lot of potential, but no structure.

"Over the past 18 months we've worked hard to put a development plan in place and have been awarded FA community club status."

Before the football course kicks off, successful students will be selected from a trial process.

Those interested in joining the course can contact the club on 01722 776655.



SAFETY PUSH: Romsey Town's Danny Phillips, left.

Costly call off for Boatmen



DIAPER

THE late postponement of Wednesday's Hampshire FA Senior Cup tie at Havant & Waterlooville made for a costly night all round for Sholing.

Not only has it added yet another game to their mountainous fixture backlog, but it was money down the drain for the cost of a team coach too.

After a bleak run-up to Christmas, the Boatmen have had a promising start to the year, winning all four of their 2013 league and cup games.

Eager to keep that momentum going, manager Dave Diaper decided to make the short trip down the M27 by coach to help with team bonding.

"We got a coach down to Havant because I prefer all the lads to be together, but it didn't help with the game being called off," he said.

"It means that's another league game lost too. The Havant game's been rearranged for Tuesday (January 29, 7.45pm) and we were due to play Bridgwater on Wednesday."

Despite those obvious frustrations, Diaper had no complaints about the decision to postpone the cup tie less than hour before kick-off.

Havant's Westleigh Park surface had been perfectly playable at 3pm, but two late after-

noon downpours left a 20m square patch unplayable.

Several Havant fans expressed their dismay on the club forum, suggesting games are called off way too easily these days.

But Diaper said: "I've no complaints. I didn't walk out onto the pitch, I just took the word of the referee. You've got to go along with the outcome of the pitch inspection.

"With the way the weather is now, a match can be on at 3pm and off at 7pm.

"These things can't be helped and it's not as if we'd had to travel from Bristol or somewhere. It was the same for both teams.

"Speaking to Havant boss Lee Bradbury afterwards, he was just as keen as I was to get the game on. They're falling behind with their fixtures as well.

"It's all a bit concerning to be honest. This season is so stop-start, I'll be glad when it's over."

The Hawks last played on January 8 when they suffered a 1-0 defeat at Tonbridge Angels in the Blue Square Bet South.

But they, at least, are over the halfway point of the league programme – unlike Sholing who, at the start of today, had played just 16 of their 42 Southern One South & West fixtures.

FIXTURES FOR THE WEEK AHEAD – SEE PAGE 36

Non-league Football

Fans' efforts go unrewarded after Truro cry off

Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

FANS of Eastleigh and Salisbury City each put in heroic shifts shovelling snow off the clubs' respective pitches this week.

But whereas Salisbury were able to reward those efforts with a fine 3-1 win over Staines Town last Saturday, Eastleigh didn't get the chance.

Having worked their fingers to the bone to make sure Tuesday's scheduled home game against Truro City went ahead, the Spitfires were snookered by a 4pm phone call from the travelling Cornishmen saying they had had to turn back for safety reasons after being caught in a blizzard on the A38.

"It was so disappointing and frustrating after all the hard work that went into getting the game on," admitted Spitfires boss Richard Hill.

"I'd like to thank everyone who came and helped clear the snow off the pitch.

"It was a hard job and a lot of man hours went into it.

"There were lots of people including supporters, the kitman Kevin Dixon, Darren Nangle (chief operations officer), Dan Wright (reserve team manager) and myself working there until 10pm on Monday and we were all back there at 9am on Tuesday to get the job done.

"We gave the game every chance of going ahead but I'm still not sure we were afforded the same decency back. We told Truro on Monday the pitch would be fit, so they had over 24 hours to get here.

"But they weren't leaving until 12.15pm on Tuesday and, if it had been the other way round in light of the recent weather, I'd have been saying to our lads let's leave at 11am.

"I know Truro have a long way to travel, but they knew when they joined the league what it entailed."

So tight is the Blue Square Bet South table that had Eastleigh played Truro and won, they would have climbed to 11th, just four points outside the play-off zone, and the world would have looked a



SPADE WORK: Salisbury City fans cleared snow off the pitch so that Saturday's game against Staines could go ahead.

POSTPONEMENT IS (S)NO(W) FUN

much brighter place.

But as things stand, they went into today's scheduled home game against Farnborough stuck third-to-bottom of the standings with half their league fixtures still to play.

"We don't know if we'd have beat-

en Truro but, if we had, the players, everyone, would be feeling great, but that opportunity was taken away from us," said Hill.

Contrast that with soaraway league leaders Salisbury who, having successfully staged the only

game in the entire division this week, stretched the gap over second-placed Welling to nine points.

Unsurprisingly, the Whites are now quoted as 10/11 favourites to win automatic promotion by league sponsors Blue Square Bet.

After goals by ex-Saint Jamie White, Elliott Frear and Chris McPhee had seen off Staines, delighted Whites boss Darrell Clarke, who himself spent over three hours shovelling away the snow, said: "I'd like to give a big thank you to the fans for clearing the pitch and making the game happen. They deserve the three points.

"The lads really appreciate it as well.

"A real good non-League team spirit was shown to get the game on.

"It was disappointing not to get many (464) through the turnstiles, but a lot of people thought the game was off.

"It was important we played the game and registered a victory.

"When we were clearing the snow I was telling the fans we might be the only game on and if - and it's all if - we win the game, it puts a bit of pressure on other teams."



RICHARD HILL

Hill on drive to improve away form

MANAGER Richard Hill is exploring every possible avenue to improve Eastleigh's dire away form.

With just one win and a draw registered out of 11 league road trips this season, it's pretty obvious where the Spitfires need to improve if they are to mount a play-off push in the second half of the Blue Square Bet South campaign.

Hill is hopeful that the recruitment of three quality defenders - Chris Todd, Dean Beckwith and Alex Lacey (loan) - will go some way to tightening the back door on their travels.

And, in an ideal world, he would like to find a way of getting the whole squad to travel together to games, even if it's only

for part of the journey.

It's a fact of life that the higher clubs progress up the non-League pyramid, the wider they cast their net for players.

With the notable exceptions of Michael Green, Jack Dovey and Craig McAllister, very few of Eastleigh's squad could be classed as 'local' players. The majority travel down from the London area, while new signing Todd comes from as far afield as Devon.

As a result, players are left to their own devices to get to games rather than rolling up on the customary team coach.

"We never travel together for any game," said Hill.

"Generally in this league we're playing

in London and the surrounding area, so lads don't want to come all the way down to Eastleigh to get a bus back to where they've come from.

"The ideal scenario going forward would perhaps be to meet at a hotel for a pre-match meal and get a coach to take us on the last little bit of the journey.

"But that wouldn't come cheap. At a guess it would be £500-£600 for every away game which, 21 times over, would add up to a lot of money. And if Stew (chairman Stewart Donald) were to say we could either spend it on that or, for example, have Alex Lacey on loan for the rest of the season, then I'd

have to take Alex Lacey.

"But it's something we'll give some thought to because we don't want to be a team of strangers."

Eastleigh's recent switch to daytime training has already gone some way to helping with team bonding.

"In the old days the lads used to rush in for evening training at 6.30-6.45pm and then dash straight off again afterwards," said Hill.

"But now there's a nice pot of tea waiting in the mornings when they arrive and they can sit down for a meal and a chat afterwards and build up a bit of rapport. It's yet another advantage of training during the day."

EMAIL THE SPORTS DESK AT echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Killick mindful of trick table ...

TOM Killick believes the Southern League Division One South & West has yet to take shape.

Although his Poole Town side have reached the mid-point of their season, there are other clubs who are either miles behind or miles ahead with their fixtures.

With just 16 games played so far, Sholing – play-off finalists for the last three seasons – have played ten games fewer than league leaders Hungerford Town.

And Tatnam boss Killick, right, says this disparity, combined with an inconsistency in results and a number of other factors, is contributing to several clubs finding themselves in a false position.

"It's a strange league and there isn't an awful lot to choose between the teams all the way through," he said.

"If you had looked at the table a few weeks ago, Yate and Paulton were both near the bottom. Now Yate are climbing steadily and are mid-table and Paulton are challenging for the play-offs.

"Teams seem to come with a spurt and you can see Sholing being the next.

"It can be down to a change in manager or an influx of players.

"There is a lot of inconsistency in terms of opposition and, sometimes, you get a bit of luck and play teams at the right time."

Although Hungerford remain top, their manager Bobby Wilkinson is all too aware of the threat posed by Killick's Dolphins.

"Poole have to be the title favourites because they've got a few games in hand on us," he said.

"But if they slip up a couple of times and come to us and we beat them, it all changes.

"My task is to get us promoted and we're top of the table. I'd rather be in our position with the points on the board."

It was Poole who beat Hungerford in last year's South & West play-off semi-finals before themselves losing out to Gosport in the final.

And Wilkinson is determined to bring Premier Division football to the Berkshire club this time round.

"Hungerford gave me my opportunity in this league and I would love to get the club promoted for the board, the team and the fans. It would be a dream come true," he said.

Poole missed their chance to narrow the gap on Hungerford on Wednesday when their scheduled trip to Clevedon was postponed.



EXETER WINGER WANTS SALISBURY DEAL

AS ELLIOTT Frear's time ticks away with Conference South leaders Salisbury City, he is not ruling out a long-term future at the club.

The on-loan Exeter City winger, pictured, has shone for Salisbury since he arrived at Old Sarum in October.

Now the 22-year-old, whose third loan period expires next month, admits a permanent move to the Whites could be imminent.

"I want to get something sorted out on a permanent basis at the club," he said.

"Hopefully the gaffer will be talking with Exeter soon.

"I want to get something done, but I need to hear what Exeter say and what they want to do with me first.

"My contract's up at the end of the season and obviously I need to be in the shop window. I'd be more than happy to sign here (at Salisbury), especially if they get promoted.

"I've massively enjoyed my time at the club so far.

"I love playing here and Darrell Clarke's given me the opportuni-

ty to play and I wasn't really getting a game at Exeter.

"At my age I need match play and I'm really enjoying it.

"The club's got some lovely fans and they've been really supportive."

Frear opened his Salisbury goal account with a cheeky effort in the 3-1 home win over Staines Town – much to the wideman's relief.

"It's been on my mind for the past month to get my first goal for the club and it's nice to get it out of the way," he said.

"I came off just after half-time with a slight injury but, hopefully, I'll be OK for Boreham Wood (today).

"I wanted to come here and hit the ground running and win games for the club."

Salisbury were virtually home and hosed after 20 minutes last Saturday as ex-Saint Jamie White, Frear and Chris McPhee put Staines to the sword.

In manager Clarke's books, those opening exchanges featured the best football his players have produced this term.

"Our pressure and closing down for the first 30 minutes was probably the best I've seen from

the lads all season and we got our reward with three goals," he said.

But Clarke wasn't as impressed after the interval, admitting: "I was disappointed with our second-half performance. We were sloppy all over the pitch and we lost our shape and discipline. It's something we need to work on.

"But ultimately it's about getting the three points."

Thanks to the efforts of more than 60 volunteers who helped clear snow off the Old Sarum pitch, Salisbury's was the only BSB South game to beat the weather last Saturday.

As a result, they pulled nine points clear of Welling at the top having played three games more.

Playing down title talk, Clarke cautioned: "Obviously everyone will tell you the points are on the board, but it's about not getting carried away.

"We're just happy to be sitting at the top of the table.

"We're not nine points clear, Welling are top because they have got three games in hand. That's the way we look at it.

"Theoretically teams have got to catch up with games, and it's as tight as it's always been.



LOCAL AND NATIONAL FOOTBALL FIXTURES FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

Monday, January 28
npower FOOTBALL LEAGUE
League 2: Exeter v Torquay.
BLUE SQUARE BET CONFERENCE
South: Boreham Wood v Hayes & Yeading, Chelmsford v Dorchester.
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division: Hitchin v St Neots.
Division One South & West: Mangotsfield v Didcot.
RUSSELL COTES CUP
Quarter-final: Bemerton HH v Gosport Borough.
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Wyvern Challenge Shield: Group C: Team Solent v New Milton.

Tuesday, January 29
Barclays Premier League
Aston Villa v Newcastle, QPR v Man City, Stoke v Wigan, Sunderland v Swansea.
npower FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Championship: Barnsley v Millwall, Bristol City v Watford.
League One: Crawley Town v Preston, Leyton Orient v Swindon, Portsmouth v Notts County, Yeovil v Milton Keynes Dons.
League Two: Gillingham v Northampton, Oxford Utd v Burton Albion.
FA TROPHY
Fourth round: Grimsby v Luton.
BLUE SQUARE BET CONFERENCE
Premier: Barrow v Macclesfield Town, Gateshead v Stockport County, Hereford v Mansfield Town, Kidderminster v AFC Telford, Newport County v Braintree Town, Woking v Forest Green Rovers, Wrexham v Southport.
South: Bath City v Welling, Billerica v Eastbourne Borough, Farnborough v Salisbury City, Maidenhead v Sutton.
HAMPSHIRE SENIOR CUP
Quarter-finals: AFC Bournemouth v Eastleigh (at New Milton Town FC), AFC

Totton v Gosport Borough, Havant & Waterlooville v Sholing.
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division: Banbury v Kettering, Barwell v Leamington, Bashley v Chesham, Bideford v Bedworth, Chippenham v Hemel Hempstead, Redditch v Gosport Borough.
Division One South & West: Cinderford v Bishops Cleeve, Merthyr Town v Taunton, Poole Town v Swindon Supermarine, Tiverton v Paulton, Wimbome v Shortwood, Yate v North Leigh.
RUSSELL COTES CUP
Second round: Christchurch v Hythe & Dibden.
SYDENHAMS LEAGUE
SL Cup, semi-final: Blackfield & Langley v Brockenhurst.
Premier Division: Alresford v AFC Portchester, Alton v Hamworthy, Fareham v Totton & Eling, GE Hamble v Moneyfields, Hordean v Hayling Utd.
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Premier Division: Dorchester v Christchurch.
Division One East: Hayling Utd v Whitchurch.

Wednesday, January 30
BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE
Arsenal v Liverpool, Everton v West Brom, Fulham v West Ham, Man Utd v SAINTS (8.00), Norwich v Tottenham, Reading v Chelsea.
npower FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Championship: Huddersfield v Crystal Palace.
SYDENHAMS LEAGUE
Premier Division: Newport IoW v Bournemouth Poppies.
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Wyvern Challenge Shield, second round: Laverstock & Ford v Bemerton HH, Poole Town v GE Hamble.

Group E: Alton Town v Hordean, Petersfield v Hythe & Dibden.
Premier Division: Fleet Town v Moneyfields.

Thursday, January 31
npower FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Championship: Leicester v Wolverhampton.
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Wyvern Challenge Shield, second round: Winchester City v Salisbury City.
Premier Division: Bashley v Sholing.
Division One West: Blackfield & Langley v Downton.

Friday, February 1
npower FOOTBALL LEAGUE
League One: Sheffield Utd v Coventry.
League Two: Bristol Rovers v Barnet.
BLUE SQUARE BET CONFERENCE
Premier: Ebbsfleet United v Macclesfield.

Saturday, February 2
(FL games 3pm ko unless stated)
BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE
Arsenal v Stoke, Everton v Aston Villa, Fulham v Man Utd (5.30), Newcastle v Chelsea, QPR v Norwich (12.45), Reading v Sunderland, West Ham v Swansea, Wigan v SAINTS.
npower FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Championship: Birmingham v Nottm Forest, Blackburn v Bristol City, Blackpool v Barnsley, Crystal Palace v Charlton, Derby v Huddersfield, Ipswich v Middlesbrough, Leeds v Cardiff, Millwall v Hull, Peterborough v Burnley, Sheffield Wed v Brighton, Watford v Bolton.
League One: Bury v Doncaster, Crawley Town v Swindon, Crewe v Scunthorpe United, Hartlepool v Notts County, Milton Keynes Dons v Bournemouth, Portsmouth v Colchester United, Preston North End v Shrewsbury, Stevenage v Leyton Orient, Tranmere v Carlisle, Walsall v Oldham,

Yeovil v Brentford.
League Two: AFC Wimbledon v Burton Albion, Cheltenham v Torquay, Exeter v Aldershot, Fleetwood Town v Bradford, Plymouth v Dag & Red, Port Vale v Accrington Stanley, Rochdale v Chesterfield, Rotherham v Northampton, Southend v Oxford Utd, York v Morecambe.
BARCLAYS U21 PREMIER LEAGUE
Elite Group Stage: Southampton U21 v Man Utd U21 (1.00).
BLUE SQUARE BET CONFERENCE
Premier: AFC Telford v Cambridge Utd, Barrow v Luton, Braintree Town v Lincoln City, Forest Green v Wrexham, Grimsby v Alfreton Town, Hereford v Southport, Mansfield v Dartford, Newport County v Kidderminster, Stockport County v Nuneaton, Tamworth v Gateshead, Woking v Hyde.
South: Bath City v Staines, Billerica v Boreham Wood, Chelmsford v Hayes & Yeading, Dover v Truro, Eastbourne Borough v AFC Hornchurch, Havant & Waterlooville v Basingstoke, Salisbury City v Bromley, Sutton v Eastleigh, Tonbridge Angels v Farnborough, Welling v Dorchester, Weston-super-Mare v Maidenhead.
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division: AFC Totton v Bashley, Arlesey v St Albans, Barwell v Hitchin, Bedworth v Cambridge City, Chippenham v Bideford, Frome v Banbury, Gosport Borough v Weymouth, Hemel Hempstead v Chesham, Redditch v St Neots, Stourbridge v Bedford.
Division One South & West: Bridgwater v Abingdon Utd, Cinderford v Swindon Supermarine, Didcot v Tiverton, Evesham v Mangotsfield, Hungerford v Cirencester, Merthyr Town v Bishops Cleeve, North Leigh v Taunton, Sholing v Paulton, Shortwood v Poole Town, Wimbome v Clevedon, Yate v Winchester City.

SYDENHAMS LEAGUE
Premier Division: AFC Portchester v Hayling Utd, Alresford v Fawley, Alton v Lymington, Bemerton HH v Fareham, Blackfield & Langley v Romsey, Bournemouth v Christchurch, Downton v Newport IoW, Hamworthy Utd v Moneyfields, Hordean v GE Hamble, Verwood v New Milton.
Division One: Andover NS v Stockbridge, Brockenhurst v Whitchurch, East Cowes Vics v Amesbury, Fleet Spurs v Hythe & Dibden, Laverstock & Ford v Tadley Calvea, Pewsey Vale v Petersfield, Team Solent v Cowes Sports, US Portsmouth v Ringwood.
PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE
Senior Division (2.00 kick-offs unless stated): AFC Aldermaston v Fleetlands (3.00), AFC Stoneham v Otterbourne, Bournemouth Sports v Hedge End Rangers, Liphook v Winchester Castle, Overton v Clanfield, OK Southampton v Hamble Club, Sporting BW v Paulsgrove, University of Portsmouth v Liss Athletic.
Combination (2.00 kick-offs): Clanfield v Liphook, Fleetlands v Colden Common, Hedge End Rangers v Overton, Liss v Locks Heath, Otterbourne v AFC Stoneham, Paulsgrove v Sporting Bishop's Waltham, Winchester Castle v Bournemouth Sports.
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Division One East: Fareham Town v Alresford, GE Hamble v Alton, Hayling Utd v US Portsmouth, Newport IoW v Tadley Calvea, Petersfield Town v Hordean, Whitchurch Utd v Team Solent.
Division One West: Fawley AFC v Laverstock & Ford, Hythe & Dibden v Downton, Lymington Town v East Cowes Vids, Ringwood v Verwood, Romsey Town v Blackfield & Langley.
MA HART POOLE BAY CHALLENGE CUP
Quarter-final: Christchurch Res v Sway.

MORE NON-LEAGUE IN MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO

Non-league Football

RORY CAN MAKE THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

GE HAMBLE co-boss Dave Lewis believes departing winger Rory Williams can follow Birmingham City's Eastleigh-born midfielder Wade Elliott into the professional game.

Williams was due to make his farewell appearance for the Planemakers today before climbing two levels to join Gosport Borough in the Southern Premier Division.

And, with a bit of luck, Lewis reckons the move to Privett Park could provide a stepping stone for Williams to one day ply his trade in the Football League.

A former Bashley player, Lewis's stay at the Recreation Ground coincided with the emergence of Elliott who had joined the New Forest outfit after being released from Saints' youth set-up as a 16-year-old.

It was ex-Saint Jimmy Case who eventually recommended him to AFC Bournemouth, for whom he signed as a 21-year-old in 2000. Since then Elliott has racked up over 500 professional appearances with Cherries, Burnley and Birmingham.

"Although Wade and Rory are very different players, Rory reminds me of Wade in the way he affects a game," said Lewis.

"There are lots of players with ability in the Wessex League, but very few who can use that ability in such a ruthless way out on the pitch.

"When Wade played in the Southern League at Bashley, he was head and shoulders above that level from day one and the only travesty was that he spent so long at Bash before moving into the pro game.

"Everyone could see the talent he had. I remember Frank Whitman (former Bashley manager and chairman) saying he would put him in the first team as a 15 or 16-year-old, he was that good.



"I was like 'OK Frank', but the first time I played alongside Wade in the reserves, I could see what a good player he was. You wondered

then if he would get gobbled up when he went into the Southern League, but he wasn't. It was effortless for him and I see the same thing

PROMISE: GE Hamble winger Rory Williams has been backed to follow Wade Elliott, inset, into the Football League.

in Rory. He affects games in exactly the same as Wade did.

"There are large periods of the game week in, week out, where it's all about Rory.

"He's way, way above our level and I think that once he settles in at Gosport, he'll move up and out of that league too.

"Handled correctly, he's got every chance of becoming a pro."

For Gosport-based Williams, the move will be a return to his hometown club. But he is a very different player now to the one that last graced Privett Park.

It was only when Danny Bowers, Hamble's former manager, converted him to a left winger that the true extent of his talent emerged.

"Rory used to be a left-back sometimes used in left-midfield, but since Danny converted him to a left winger he hasn't looked back," said Lewis.

"There was never going to be a good time for him to leave Hamble, but going to Gosport is too good an opportunity for Rory to turn down. I'm not talking money, I'm talking about him joining a good, structured football club.

"I used to play for (Gosport boss) Alex Pike at Wimborne and (assistant manager) Mick Catlin at Andover and I know they will look after him.

"Alex contacted me last week to say he'd heard Bognor had come in for Rory and that if he (Williams) was ever interested in leaving Hamble, Gosport would like to register an interest.

"I could easily have kept Rory, but I couldn't keep that (Gosport's interest) from him because he deserves the best.

"Just as there were not many Wade Elliotts around at the time, there are not many Rory Williams around either. He's irreplaceable for us.

"But Rory's such a nice lad and, on a personal level, we're all delighted he's got himself a really good move."

Non-league News

Warren says Bye to the Magpies

WARREN Byerley this week agreed to sign a permanent contract for Southern One South & West promotion chasers Poole Town.

The prolific striker was poised to put pen to paper on a deal that will tie him to the Dolphins until the summer of 2014.

Byerley, pictured below, rejoined Blue Square Bet South club Dorchester Town on non-contract terms in November before joining Poole on dual registration terms to boost his match fitness.

Now, after netting eight goals in 11 appearances, the 27-year-old former Hamworthy, Gosport and Kettering marksman has opted to commit himself to Poole.

"I think he always wanted to stay and it was just a question of coming to an agreement on the finances," said Poole boss Tommy Killick. "Until everything is signed, we are not counting our chickens

but, so far, the whole process has been positive and relatively quick."

Poole's attacking resources will look increasingly healthy if Byerley completes the paperwork.

Ex-AFC Totton marksman Michael Charles is already on the books and Dan Cann is in line to sign a new contract as he closes in on full fitness following knee surgery.

"If we could get it done, it would mean we'd have Warren and Michael contracted until the end of next season. That would be a big positive for us because, in a way, that was our deficiency at the start of the season. We lost the forwards we had at the end of last season and struggled to replace them," said Killick.

"Dan Cann, who is contracted until the end of this season, has agreed, in principle, something until the end of next season.

"If we get that done we would have three exceptionally good forwards in the squad, whether we are in this league or the league above."

Dorchester boss Phil Simkin admitted it was "frustrating" that he didn't have the resources to keep Byerley at the Avenue Stadium, but said: "I wish him all the best as a personal friend and as a player."

Fareham sign teenage French professional

FAREHAM Town have added a touch of Gallic flair to their Sydenhams Premier Division squad.

The Cams Alders club have completed the signing of 18-year-old Frenchman Julien Anau from Le Championnat side, Paris FC, who play in the French third tier. Anau was set to make his Town debut

against Fawley AFC last Saturday, but the game was postponed due to a frozen pitch.

Shaun Coles, currently standing in for holidaying manager Matt Parr, explained: "Family reasons have seen Julien move across The Channel and he was recommended to us.

"He's been training with us for some five

weeks or so, but we weren't able to formally sign him until his international clearance was received.

"As you'd expect of someone who's been a professional in France, Julien has an excellent touch and control.

"He looks a good player and as soon as he gets the ball his head is up looking for

the next pass.

"He is a ball-playing midfielder and could prove a big asset."

With three inches of snow still covering the frozen Cams Alders pitch, Anau's hopes of a Fareham debut were scuppered again on Tuesday when Town's home game against Lymington was postponed.

FOOTBALL

CITY OF SOUTHAMPTON SUNDAY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Premier Division										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
City Central	6	6	0	0	37	5	18			
Knighston Arms	5	5	0	0	23	2	15			
K.R.L.	7	2	2	3	12	19	8			
Chamberlayne Athletic	6	2	2	2	19	30	8			
Old Mill	6	2	1	3	14	15	7			
Totton Town	5	1	1	3	11	13	4			
Totton Cosmos	5	1	0	4	6	19	3			
Westwood Old Boys	6	1	0	5	11	30	3			
Senior Division										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
Sholing Celtic	7	7	0	0	46	5	21			
Linden Tree	4	4	0	0	26	0	12			
Lyndhurst & N.H.	5	2	0	3	24	14	6			
Old House at Home	6	2	0	4	11	28	6			
Eastbrook Harriers	4	1	0	3	5	19	3			
Bedes Lea 97	8	1	0	7	8	54	3			
Junior Division One										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
Athletico H.C.	10	7	2	1	35	13	23			
Bridge A.F.C.	7	7	0	0	35	7	21			
Woodmill	5	4	0	1	21	11	12			
F.C. Railway	7	3	2	2	26	14	11			
Chartwell Green	9	2	2	5	15	19	8			
Newtown Athletic	5	2	0	3	12	18	6			
Castle Inn	6	2	0	4	15	22	6			
Southampton Bhoyos	6	2	0	4	11	20	6			
Echo	9	0	0	9	8	54	0			
Junior Division Two										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
Sherfield English	9	6	2	1	46	19	20			
A.F.C. Southampton	5	5	0	0	23	5	15			
Cricketers Arms	6	4	1	1	24	18	13			
Bishops Blaze	11	4	1	6	27	39	13			
Cherbourg	8	4	0	4	24	19	12			
A.F.C. Bursledon	7	4	0	3	23	23	12			
Titans	9	3	0	6	16	38	9			
Sporting Compass	5	1	0	4	16	16	3			
Hedge End Club	8	1	0	7	16	38	3			
Junior Division Three										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
AFC Riverside	7	6	0	1	20	11	18			
L.H. Galaxy	8	5	1	2	27	9	16			
AFC Horns Inn	5	5	0	0	33	3	15			
Portsmouth United	8	4	1	3	26	16	13			
Regents Park	8	4	0	4	26	19	12			
Landguard Rovers	7	4	0	3	25	18	12			
RS Ocean Village	6	4	0	2	15	12	12			
Carnival U.K.	8	0	0	8	11	50	0			
Sherfield English Res	9	0	0	9	9	54	0			
Junior Division Four										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
A.V. Chivas	8	6	0	2	27	14	18			
Hampshire Yeoman	8	5	2	1	25	12	17			
A.F.C. Portsmouth	10	5	2	3	23	24	17			
E.D.I.S.	8	5	1	2	24	16	16			
Boydatt Wood Wndrs	7	2	1	4	20	24	7			
Royale Marine	2	2	0	0	9	1	6			
Eastpoint	5	2	0	3	11	8	6			
Durley	6	2	0	4	13	16	6			
A.F.C. Marchwood	10	0	0	10	12	49	0			
Junior Division Five										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
Itchen Saints	10	6	1	3	38	30	19			
Obelisk	6	6	0	0	44	10	18			
Chartwell Green Res	6	5	1	0	33	7	16			
Bridge AFC Res	8	4	1	3	21	24	13			
Amfield	8	4	0	4	34	35	12			
A.F.C. Bishopstoke	7	3	1	3	22	18	10			
Bannister Park	7	2	1	4	21	33	7			
Burridge AFC	5	1	3	1	7	8	6			
Cherbourg Res	10	1	1	8	20	40	4			
J.S.C.	7	0	1	6	10	45	1			
Junior Division Six										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
Sky Blues	10	10	0	0	59	9	30			
Test Valley Spartans	8	4	3	1	28	19	15			
Southampton Classic	8	5	0	3	26	19	15			
H.S.C. Southern Stars	6	4	1	1	23	15	13			
Portside	8	4	1	3	29	23	13			
Athletico Totton	9	3	2	4	27	26	11			
Unity	7	3	0	4	16	22	9			
Netley R.B.L.	10	2	2	6	30	32	8			
Sporting Compass R	6	2	1	3	13	17	7			
A.F.C. Bishopstoke R	7	1	0	6	9	33	3			
Testwood Tornadoes	9	1	0	8	10	55	3			
Under-21 Division										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts			
Hedge End Rangers	7	4	1	2	29	11	13			
Burridge Youth	4	3	1	0	30	7	10			
Crofton Saints	4	3	0	1	19	5	9			
Michelmersham & Tims	7	0	0	7	9	64	0			

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TRACK QUEEN DANI EXCITED BY ROAD CHALLENGE



TRACK GOLD: Great Britain's (from left) Dani King, Laura Trott and Joanna Rowsell celebrate with their gold medals after winning the London 2012 women's Team Pursuit final.



HAMBLE'S Olympic champion Dani King has spoken of her excitement ahead of a fresh challenge on the road in 2013.

King, who won track gold in the women's team pursuit at London 2012, has been confirmed as part of the women's Wiggle Honda Pro Cycling team, which was launched yesterday and is backed by Tour de France champion Sir Bradley Wiggins, pictured left, through his foundation.

The 22-year-old is joined by Laura Trott, who rode with King at last summer's Games.

■ CYCLING

"It's incredible for me to have this opportunity," King said. "It's great for women's cycling as well. It's such a professional set-up and it's great."

"I can't wait to race with the team. It's going to be a great year. Track still is my number one focus, but hopefully I'll be able to help the team perform and get a result myself, once I've found my feet a bit."

The pair will race on the road together for the first time in April, but their initial focus is the Track

Cycling World Championships in Belarus next month.

King said: "We've spent the last two years living with each other day-in, day-out. I think I can put up with her for a bit longer, if I have to."

Whether they ride on the road at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016 depends on a possible further overhaul of the track programme, but King anticipates she will be on the track in Brazil.

"I'll be aiming for the track, but never say never," she said. "I haven't raced on the road yet - I might fall in love with it. At the moment, track's what I'll go for."

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TOTTON COLLEGE: Standing (from left): Jo Tessem (coach), Roy Johnson, Nathan Hurst, Dec Cleft, Mat Freddricks, Sam Elson, Josh Armstrong, Jo Spratt, Ant Merriman (manager). Front: Arron Patten, Jack Rogers, Jake Percival, James Clifton, Jake Swift, James Henry.



Doubles delight

BEN Mogg and Lian Donachy scored twice each as Poole Grammar beat Barton Peveril 5-1 in one of only two Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges League matches to survive the elements.

Mogg's brace gave PGS a 2-0 half-time lead, which BP trimmed back after the break. But Donachy's double, and a fifth from Jack Purchase, rounded off a fine Poole victory.

Queen Mary's twice came from behind to draw 2-2 with Bournemouth, who snatched an early lead through Matt Selby.

Following up on a header by Dan Alliston, Jubril Borishade put QMC on level terms, only for Ollie Yeadon to put Bournemouth back in front.

But parity was restored five minutes from time when Luke Yelland picked out Alliston to make it 2-2.

WEDNESDAY'S FIXTURES Peter Munro Cup semi-finals: Brockenhurst v Totton, Sparsholt v Portsmouth. Colleges League: Bournemouth v Havant, Peter Symonds v Queen Mary's, Poole Grammar v Itchen, Richard Taunton's v Southampton City, South Downs v Barton Peveril.

QF carrot

SOUTHAMPTON Boys will play their Poole & East Dorset counterparts in the English Schools' Under-15 Trophy quarter-final - if both teams win their delayed fifth round ties.

Poole were due to have played Swansea at Poole Town's Tatnam Ground on Thursday evening, but the tie was called off because the pitch surface had not fully recovered after the bad weather.

They will try again next Thursday, either at Poole Town (6.30) or, if Tatnam is not available, on Canford School's artificial 3G surface at Wimborne.

TESSEM'S CHARGES ON CHARGE

TOTTON are through to the Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges Peter Munro Cup semi-final at long last.

They eventually played their long delayed second-round tie against Havant in midweek and ran out 7-1 winners, writes MIKE VIMPANY.

The win has set up a tasty semi-final showdown with Brockenhurst on Wednesday for a place in the final itself on March 20.

Beaten finalists for the past two seasons, Sparsholt play penalty shoot-out special-ists Portsmouth in the other semi-final.

Totton followed Brockenhurst's example and switched their tie to Southampton Solent University's excellent 3G surface at Test Park in midweek - and what a difference it made to the standard of football.

Playing on unkempt, bumpy college or public park pitches does these young footballers no good at all: put them on a decent surface they have to play football in its proper sense and bad tackles are at a premium.

Havant hadn't played a college game since mid-November and immediately found themselves up against it with Totton 2-0 up in 12 minutes - a deficit they never looked capable of clawing back.

James Henry headed Totton into the lead from a free-kick - an advantage Jake Swift, the provider of the first goal, doubled soon after, with the impressive Roy Johnson initiating the move.

When Nathan Hurst got a third after the break, it was simply a case of how many goals Totton would get.

James Clifton shot across the face of the Havant goalkeeper to make it 4-0 before Dec Cleft came off the substitute's bench to deliver a delightful left-foot fifth soon after.

A Clifton header and a chipped seventh goal by Swift completed the scoring before James Wilson got a consolation reply for Havant.

Next Wednesday's semi-final showdown with Brockenhurst - who knocked out cup holders Itchen 1-0 in the last round - will be a season defining occasion for Totton.

The nucleus of Joe Tessem's side, including midfield Lynchpin Josh Armstrong, are in their final academic year at Water Lane, so some silverware success this season would be timely indeed.

Wednesday's other semi-final, high up on the downs above Sparsholt College of Agriculture, features two sides who won their second round ties in penalty shoot-outs.

Sparsholt were held 2-2 by Barton Peveril before winning 4-3 in a spot-kick finale, while Portsmouth enjoyed an identical success from the 12-yard spot at Farnborough.

In the Second XI Cup, holders Itchen entertain South Downs, with Peter Symonds College awaiting the winners of the delayed Fareham-Queen Mary's College tie.

It's unlikely any Gosport side has been in a Hampshire Colleges final before, but that will change at 3rd XI level this season, with Bay House and St Vincent facing up in the semi-finals, with the winners taking on Brockenhurst or Itchen.

SOUTHAMPTON TYRO LEAGUE STANDINGS

Under-15 - Division 1								Chamberlayne Athletic								8	2	1	5	18	19			
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts																	
Pace Panthers	8	8	0	0	24	3	24	Sarisbury Spks Amber	9	10	8	3	8	66	3									
Oakwood Terriers	5	5	0	0	28	2	15	Division 4																
Winchester Youth	10	4	1	5	29	23	13	Romsey Tn Panthers	11	9	2	0	62	20	29									
Eastleigh Warriors	9	3	2	4	20	19	11	Winchester Yth Blue	10	9	1	0	55	11	29									
Oakwood Raiders	10	3	1	6	18	35	10	Southside AFC	12	8	0	4	41	28	24									
Sholing Youth Red	4	3	0	1	10	4	9	Sarisbury Spks Black	10	5	0	2	35	39	15									
Eastleigh Wolves	8	3	0	5	15	22	9	Oakwood Lions	7	4	0	2	20	13	7									
Baddesley Park	8	0	0	8	6	36	0	Hythe Strikers	10	4	0	6	24	31	10									
Division 2								H & Dibden Turbos	10	3	1	6	20	34	10									
Sholing Youth White	11	8	0	3	43	23	24	Romsey Tn Cougars	10	3	1	6	22	38	10									
Bitterne Youth	10	7	2	1	50	15	23	Brendon Youth	11	2	0	9	14	37	6									
Hythe & Dibden Rngs	7	4	3	0	17	6	15	Townhill Lingland	13	2	0	1	23	58	3									
Wyvern Youth	9	3	0	6	12	40	9	Division 5																
Wells Youth	8	2	2	4	10	15	8	AFC Stoneham	8	7	0	0	88	7	24									
Eastleigh Juniors Blue	9	2	2	5	13	22	8	H End Rangers White	10	7	2	1	38	17	23									
Salisbury City	5	2	1	2	16	16	7	Q K Southampton	9	4	1	4	27	21	10									
AFC Hiltbury	11	2	0	9	30	54	6	Windsor United Sports	9	7	1	4	25	35	17									
Division 3								AFC H'bury Harriers	10	3	2	5	25	45	11									
Warsash Wasps	10	10	0	0	43	15	27	S & D Youth	8	3	1	4	29	26	11									
C Common Rangers	9	7	1	1	57	16	22	Wyvern Youth	9	3	1	5	26	53	10									
Southside AFC	10	6	0	4	34	23	18	Bitterne Youth	9	2	1	6	17	33	10									
C Common Rovers	11	4	0	7	26	33	12	Bar Park Knights	10	2	0	8	16	53	3									
Bashley Youth	9	4	2	3	30	17	11	East Boldre Bulldogs	6	1	2	3	26	26	3									
Hythe Strikers	9	2	1	6	24	33	7	Under-12 - Division 1																
H End Rangers Blue	6	1	0	5	18	27	3																	
Sportstars	8	0	0	8	7	75	0	Sholing Youth White	9	8	0	1	39	9	24									
Division 4								Salisbury City	9	6	1	2	26	16	19									
Romsey Town	10	7	1	2	44	20	22	Pace Youth	7	5	0	2	21	7	15									
Totton Rangers	10	6	1	3	30	19	19	C Common Rovers	6	3	1	2	12	10	7									
Bitterne Youth Reds	7	6	0	1	36	8	18	Eastleigh Juniors	6	3	0	3	11	15	8									
H End Rangers White	7	5	0	2	28	14	15	Q K Southampton	7	2	2	1	18	6	8									
BTC Southampton	10	5	0	5	32	34	15	Sholing Youth Red	7	0	3	4	5	16	9									
Wells Youth	8	2	2	4	10	15	8	Botley Village	9	0	1	8	10	41	3									
Windsor United Sports	8	1	2	5	11	26	5	Division 2																
Kingsway Colts	8	0	0	8	8	40	0	H End Rangers Blue	9	9	0	0	58	7	27									
Division 5								C Common Royals	7	7	0	0	40	16	21									
Weston Sports	8	8	0	0	93	6	24	Warsash Wasps	9	6	1	2	28	19	19									
Sky Blues	9	8	0	1	53	10	24	Oakwood Panthers	10	4	1	5	30	37	13									
Alresford Town	8	4	1	3	53	23	13	AFC Stoneham Red	8	4	0	4	22	12	12									
Ice Sports	7	5	0	2	70	13	12	City Central	11	4	0	7	28	18	12									
Fawley Falcons	8	4	0	4	39	28	12	Barkston Park	8	2	3	2	22	37	10									
Itchen Bulldogs	12	4	0	8	31	58	12	Oakwood Hawks	7	1	0	6	10	30	1									
Hamble United	10	3	1	6	35	46	10	Sportstars	7	0	0	7	7	41	0									
S & D Youth	12	0	0	12	5	195	0	Division 3																
Under-14 - Division 1								Romsey Tn Panthers	8	7	1	0	31	13	22									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	C Common Rangers	9	5	2	2	25	20	17									
Pace Pumas	8	7	1	0	31	4	22	St Francis Rangers	8	5	1	2	25	15	16									
H End Rangers Blue	7	6	1	0	30	5	19	H End Rangers White	4	4	0	4	18	4	12									
Winchester Yth Black	7	3	3	1	26	11	12	H & Dibden Phoenix	10	3	3	4	14	14	8									
Wyvern Youth	7	3	1	3	17	14	10	Q K Southampton	9	2	3	1	18	13	10									
C Common Rangers	9	2	1	6	11	21	7	Townhill Lingland	9	2	1	6	14	23	7									
Salisbury City	7	2	1	4	13	25	3	Michelmersh & Tims	9	2	1	6	16	26	7									
Romsey Town Cougars	7	1	0	5	9	43	3	St Francis Rovers	11	1	3	7	19	42	6									
BTC Soton Nimrods	5	0	0	5	4	18	0	Division 4																
Division 2								Bitterne Youth	11	9	1	1	51	21	26									
Pirelli Pirates	7	7	0	0	66	8	21	Oakwood Eagles	12	9	0	3	64	23	21									
Bashley Youth	8	5	0	3	26	26	15	Ice Sports	8	6	1	1	36	16	15									
Warsash Wasps	8	4	1	3	21	31	13	AFC Hiltbury	11	5	2	4	57	45	17									
St Francis Rangers	7	3	2	2	18	13	11	Hythe Strikers	10	4	1	5	37	45	13									
H End Rangers White	8	3	2	3	18	21	7	Wyvern Rangers	8	5	2	2	22	27	10									
AFC H'bury Hawks	8	1	3	4	8	23	6	Romsey Tn Cougars	10	1	1	8	12	51	4									
Alresford Town	8	0	0	8	13	48	0	Fawley Falcons	10	2	2	9	22	59	3									
Division 3								Division 5																
Pace Panthers	9	6	1	2	35	18	19	Southside AFC	10	9	0	1	57	13	23									
Salisbury Spks Amber	6	6	0	0	28	7	18	Windsor United Sports	9	8	1	0	30	6	25									
Winchester Yth Blue	8	5	2	1	32	12	17	Hamble United	7	6	0	1	44	8	18									
Testwood United	10	5	2	3	28	20	17	Roadway Rovers	10	3	1	6	33	47	10									
Sarisbury Spks Black	8	4	2	2	25	12	14	H & Dibden Legends	8	2	3	3	23	22	5									
Totton Rangers	10	2	1	7	20	36	7	Sarisbury Spks	8	2	1	5	18	35	8									
Brendon Youth	9	1	1	7	7	49	4	S & D Youth	8	1	3	5	13	25	3									
St Denys Youth	8	0	1	7	14	35	1	AFC Stoneham Blue	8	2	0	6	11	45	3									
Division 4								Brendon Youth	7	0	0	7	9	37	0									
Hythe & Dibden	7	6	0	1	45	9	18	Under-11 - Division 1																
Oakwood Tigers	10	5	2	3	33	24	17																	
Southside AFC	7	5	1	1	27	9	16	Eastleigh Jnrs White	7	6	0	1	35	10	18									
Townhill Lingland	7	4	1	2	26	15	13	Bitterne Youth Black	6	5	0	1	25	10	15									
Q K Southampton	7	2	2	3	11	15	8	H End Rangers Blue	5	4	0	1	15	7	12									
Pace Cougars	7	1	0	6	8	35	3	Salisbury City	5	2	1	2	18	11	7									
AFC Stoneham	9	0	2	7	9	52	2	Pace Pumas	4	2	0	2	13	11	6									
Division 5								Eastleigh Juniors Blue	8	2	0	6	28	31	7									
Michelmersh & Tims	8	7	1	0	62	22	22	Winchester Yth Black	4	1	1	2	15	16	6									
Brookhill Youth	9	7	0	2	37	16	21	Hamble Utd Orange	7	0	0	7	7	60	0									
GE Hamble	8	5	0	3	31	19	15	Division 2																
Wyvern Dragons	8	3	2	3	36	32	11	Pace Panthers	9	7	1	1	40	16	22									
Netley Royals	8	3	1	4	17	26	10	Totton Rangers	8	6	0	2	27	19	15									
H End Rangers Red	8	2	2	4	21	30	8	Littlton Juniors Lions	9	4	3	2	23	27	15									
S & D Youth	9	2	2	5	13	29	8	Oakwood Reds	7	3	1	3	26	18	7									
Botley Village Bears	6	1	0	5	6	23	3	Sportstars	4	3	0	1	20	9	9									
Hythe Strikers Spitfires	6	1	0	5	14	40	3	Sarisbury Spks Amber	9	2	3	4	25	21	9									
Division 6								Winchester Yth Blue	8	2	0	4	25	31	6									
Marchwood Rangers	7	6	0	1	68	11	18	H & Dibden Hornets	10	0	0	19	19	64	0									
P Pirates Crusaders	9	6	0	3	62	36	18	Division 3																
Windsor United Sports	8	6	0	2	45	23	18	Southbrook FC	7	7	0	0	40	11	21									
H Strikers Hurricanes	6	5	0	1	40	7	15	Warsash Wasps	8	6	1	1	37	16	16									
Romsey Town	8	4	0	4	38	49	12	Littlton Jnrs Leopards	8	3	2	3	31	11	10									
Bitterne Tn Panthers	7	3	0	4	24	32	9	Weston Sports	6	3	1	2	17	34	7									
St Francis Rovers	7	1	1	5	18	29	4	Botley Village	5	3	0	2	17	11	9									
Baddesley Park	6	1	1	4	17	33	4	Fleming Park Tigers	8	2	1	5	17	28	7									
Fawley Falcons	8	0	0	8	7	99	0	Baddesley Park	7	2	0	5	18	31	6									
Under-13 - Division 1								C Common Royals	11	1	1	9	16	51	4									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Division 4																
Eastleigh Juniors Red	8	6	2	0	34	7	20	C Common Rangers	9	9	0	0	52	16	27									
Q K Southampton	7	4	2	1	20	15	14	Southbrook United	9	8	0	1	37	10	24									
Eastleigh Jnrs White	6	3	2	1	13	12	11	Windsor United Sports	9	1	5	15												

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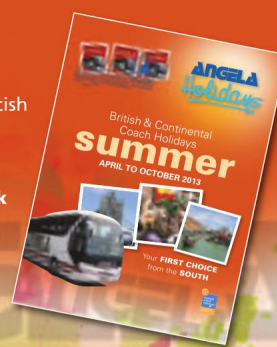
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RBS 6 Nations 2013: team-by-team guide

England



Coach: Stuart Lancaster

Having secured the job on a permanent basis following last season's tournament, Lancaster was beginning to come under pressure after autumn defeats to Australia and South Africa. The stunning victory over New Zealand changed all that, but also brings a high level of expectation. **Captain: Chris Robshaw** His leadership came in for criticism in the autumn, and his suitability for the No.7 role was questioned. A stunning personal display against New Zealand and Richie McCaw ended the doubts, and he has proved an excellent appointment. **Star man: Manu Tuilagi** Continues to improve as England find different ways to use the Leicester centre's power. Impressed throughout the autumn and his combination of pace, power and defensive work put him in contention for Lions honours.

France

Coach: Philippe Saint-Andre

The signs are that Saint-Andre is starting to forge a powerful side following the chaos of Marc Lievreumont's reign. Last year's RBS 6 Nations spluttered to its conclusion with defeats to England and Wales, but impressive autumn wins over Australia and Argentina suggest Les Bleus are on the march.

Captain: Pascal Pape

Saint-Andre has chosen to stick with the Stade Francais lock after he led France to three wins from three during the autumn in the absence of Thierry Dusautoir.

Star man: Frederic Michalak

Brought out of the international wilderness by Saint-Andre, the Toulon half-back enjoyed an outstanding autumn as he guided France to wins over Australia, Argentina and Samoa from the No.10 shirt. Is showing the sort of form that marked him out as a star over a decade ago.



Ireland



Coach: Declan Kidney

Kidney is under pressure after heavy defeats at the hands of England and New Zealand (twice) over the last 12 months. Ireland convincingly saw off an exhausted Argentina at the end of the autumn, but more is expected from the RBS 6 Nations.

Captain: Jamie Heaslip

The No.8 surprisingly got the nod ahead of talismanic centre Brian O'Driscoll, but impressed when handed the role of skipper during the autumn and is seen by Kidney as Ireland's long-term leader.

Star man: Rob Kearney

One of the best full-backs in the world. Kearney's excellence was one of the main reasons for Leinster's Heineken Cup triumph of last season. Immaculate under the high ball, with a booming left foot and sharp counter-attacking game, Ireland will be delighted to have him back from injury.

Italy

Coach: Jacques Brunel

The former coach of Colomiers and Perpignan acquitted himself well after succeeding Nick Mallett, but progress for the Azzurri is proving steady rather than spectacular. Beat Scotland last season and should have beaten England. Will be seeking at least one win from home fixtures against Wales, France and Ireland.

Captain: Sergio Parisse

Italy's best player by some distance, the No.8 would grace any side in the world game. A gifted and powerful ball carrier with a supreme attitude to the defensive side of the game who leads by example.

Star man: Sergio Parisse

The likes of Andrea Masi and Alessandro Zanni are valuable contributors, but they cannot touch Parisse's mix of athleticism and grit. Rugby followers can only wonder at the sort of impact he would make if he played for one of the international game's big guns.



Scotland



Interim coach: Scott Johnson

The Australian has previously held various roles with the Wallabies, Wales and USA, and gets the chance to lead Scotland after Andy Robinson's departure. Few expectations to deal with, given Robinson won only two of his 15 RBS 6 Nations matches.

Captain: TBA

Johnson has plenty of options. Flanker Kelly Brown held the role towards the end of Andy Robinson's reign, while hooker Ross Ford and lock Alastair Kellock also have leadership experience. But the interim coach could be tempted to hand it to Richie Gray.

Star man: Richie Gray

Gray may be playing in a struggling Sale team, but the distinctive lock forward remains one of Scotland's few world-class players. The 23-year-old allies great athleticism around the field with his finesse as a reliable line-out forward.

Wales

Interim coach: Rob Howley

Howley finds himself in the unenviable position of trying to fill Warren Gatland's shoes after the Kiwi guided Wales to the World Cup semi-finals and a Grand Slam. The former scrum-half is under pressure after a run of seven defeats, and has got a long injury list to cope with.

Captain: Sam Warburton

The Cardiff Blues man has been short of his best form so far this season, but remains a talismanic figure for Wales, who benefit immeasurably from his assured leadership and pilfering work at the breakdown, and he is a certainty to be a Lions tourist barring injury.

Star man: Jonathan Davies

It says everything about Davies' form over the last 18 months that a New Zealand paper selected him at centre in their World XV ahead of All Black Conrad Smith. Davies' combination of pace and power make him a handful for any defence.



England lay down a marker, but won't get it all their own way

THE memory of one magical performance and one huge result hangs over the 2013 RBS 6 Nations.

Can England emulate the talent, power and artistry they demonstrated while beating New Zealand 38-21 in the autumn?

Was that explosion of brilliance against the best team in the world down to a tired All Blacks side who had been laid low with a virus in the days leading up to the match?

Or was it the beginning of an era which could see Stuart Lancaster's England side dominate northern hemisphere competition and punch their weight consistently with the big boys of world rugby?

For England fans, the signs are exciting.

Not least in the fact that Lancaster appears to have assembled a squad with strength in depth and a pleasing balance of youth and experience.

Lancaster had no worries in drafting in Joe Launchbury, Tom Youngs, Mako Vunipola and Freddie Burns after they impressed in the autumn, while the

by **Frank Malley**

inclusion of James Haskell to replace Phil Dowson in the back row and the squad place for Billy Twelvetrees suggests Lancaster's philosophy is based on attack and adventure.

Twelvetrees may not displace the tough-tackling Brad Barritt immediately, but the Gloucester back is just the type Lancaster has been looking for. An inside centre who can pass left and right, one who can kick and carry. Think Jeremy Guscott, and you get an idea of what Twelvetrees may offer in the future.

The pressing decision for Lancaster, however, could be who to start in the pivotal No.10 role against Scotland on February 2.

Should he go with the tested but limited Toby Flood? Should he back the nous and goal-kicking reliability of Owen Farrell, an organised fly-half who distributes the ball with aplomb but lacks pace and running incision at the highest level?

Or does he go with Burns, the 22-year-old Gloucester

fly-half, once mentored by instinctive former All Black Carlos Spencer, who came on to make his England debut against New Zealand and gave Lancaster a glimpse of what the future could be with a running, side-stepping fly-half of genuine charisma?

It is a welcome dilemma for Lancaster, and an intriguing diversion for the RBS 6 Nations, which is rarely anything other than unpredictable.

One thing is for certain. It is not all about England. They may have had the stand-out result in the autumn and have three of their matches at Twickenham, but the pride and ambition which fuels the RBS 6 Nations guarantees competitive action.

Wales, under interim coach Rob Howley, will be looking to halt their under-achievement since winning the Grand Slam last season, much of which has been put down to Warren Gatland taking a sabbatical to prepare to coach the British and Irish Lions this summer. The



SILVER SERVICE:

England's autumn win over the All Blacks has raised expectations

Welsh have not trained on with the progress many expected since their unfortunate defeat in the semi-finals of the 2011 World Cup.

They lost to New Zealand and Australia but also, depressingly, to Samoa and Argentina in their last matches and are without fly-half Rhys Priestland, who is out for the season on an Achilles injury.

Howley has hinted that Dan Biggar could start at No.10, and Wales will face a tricky opening match at the Millennium Stadium against Ireland, who thumped Argentina 46-24 in the autumn.

For Ireland, Jonathan Sexton holds the key. Sexton is the stand-out favourite for the fly-half role for the Lions, and will be eager to justify that tag.

Scotland, too, have much to prove following the resignation of Andy Robinson and the interim appointment of Scott Johnson.

The Scots have decent players in dynamic forwards such as Richie Gray and David Denton, and they rarely lack heart and character. Yet they have become the whipping boys of the RBS 6 Nations, the side everyone fancies their chances against.

They picked up the wooden spoon last season and will probably again contest that dubious prize with an Italian team capable of impressive and surprising results on home territory, but who do not tend to travel well.

That leaves France and, as always, it depends on which French team turns

up. If it is the one which thumped Australia, Argentina and Samoa in the autumn, with Frederic Michalak back controlling the play and kicking the goals at fly-half, then watch out.

Michalak is a class act, and if head coach Philippe Saint-Andre can continue to get the best out of him then England against France at Twickenham on February 23 could be the match that holds the key to the championship.

The smart money is on England to adorn their continuing development with an RBS 6 Nations title after coming second last time, but no-one should put all their mortgage on it.

Therein lies the allure of a tournament which rarely fails to deliver sport at its most compelling.

Phil Vickery

NatWest RugbyForce supporter

Black to the future

“England needed that game against New Zealand to show how they can play”

THESE are exciting times for England and the expectations on the team heading into the RBS 6 Nations are going to be huge, but it is so hard to predict what is going to happen.

I was lucky that I went to the New Zealand game. It was a wonderful way to finish what was a disappointing autumn series.

I think we are all looking forward to the RBS 6 Nations, particularly with the Lions tour coming up, and it's all to play for.

I'm sure the expectations will be high within the team, but the expectations from outside the camp will be multiplied 10-fold after that result against the All Blacks.

As long as they take it in the right way, which I'm sure they will, it's got all the makings of what could be a very successful team. They will have highs and lows along the way, but I'm really excited to see what this England team can do.

Stuart Lancaster has gone through that honeymoon period with all the press and it had all become quite negative again after the defeats against Australia and South Africa, so I think they needed that game against New Zealand to show how they can play.

Ultimately a coach and players live and die by results, but for me the most

impressive thing about that performance was that this is such a new England team and there are so many inexperienced players.

The RBS 6 Nations is a very different set of emotions to the autumn internationals, and it's so difficult to call this year. Everyone has written Wales off, which is fantastic for them because they'll be going about their business quietly. Believe me, if they can get their players back fit and on the field they're going to be such a difficult team to beat.

The Irish, too, have been quietly going about their business and everyone has written them off, but they've come back in the autumn series and showed signs of being rejuvenated. It's a Lions year, and history shows that the

Celtic nations always rise that year, there's always something a little bit special.

The French boys, as crazy as they are, proved what they can do in the autumn, and I think that's a little reminder to all of us. The undoubted talent and ability they have has never been in question, but their mentality and discipline can always be questioned. Let's hope they don't get it all together because, if they do, then I think they'll be right up the top of the tree.

Scotland will be dangerous because everyone has written them off and the RBS 6 Nations could be the time for them to express themselves. They've got a good forward pack and can produce ball, so with the right guidance

they could be a threat. We have Scotland first at home and will be expected to win, and win well, but if anyone is unsure what RBS 6 Nations rugby is about then, believe me, they will find out on February 2, because Scotland will be so highly motivated and they have nothing to lose.

In terms of the England team it will be interesting to see what happens at No.10. Owen Farrell doesn't seem to be playing enough rugby at 10 at club level and Freddie Burns, who has been performing week in, week out and winning a lot of games for Gloucester, is the star at the minute in that position. I'm not questioning Owen's ability at all, I'm just questioning if you can play someone at international level at 10 when he's not playing in

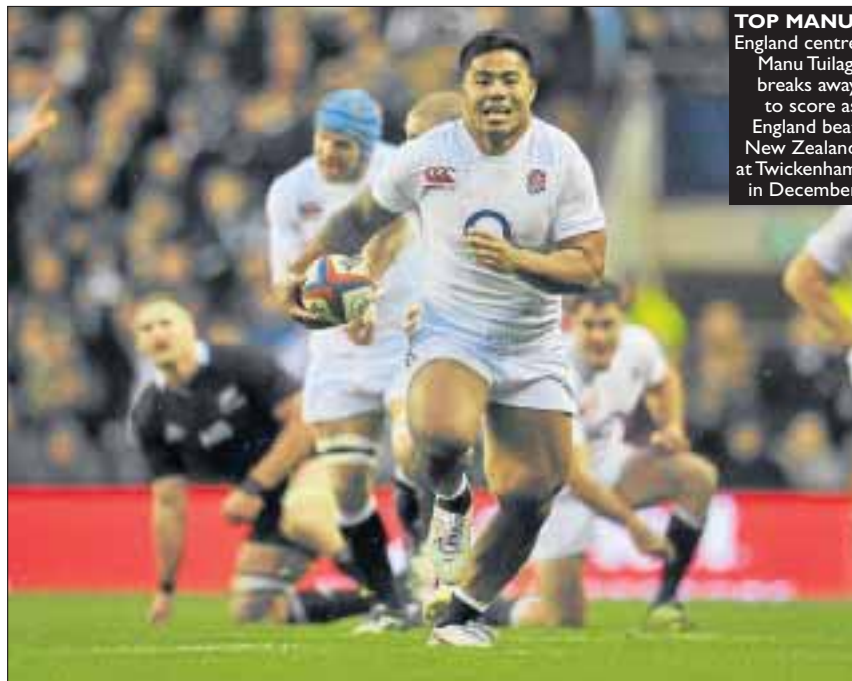
that position at his club. A lot for me will depend on selections in midfield and the backline. If the experience is there, then perhaps you could afford to move on with a Farrell or Burns but, if it's not, then Toby Flood has that experience – he's a good communicator and is reliable.

I was lucky to have been around Joe Launchbury at Wasps when I was still playing, and he's such a good lad and someone who Lancaster should be building the England pack around, along with Dan Cole. I think it would be nice to see Courtney Lawes coming back as well. Courtney has had a horrific time with injuries, but his dynamism and athletic ability coupled with a Launchbury is a wonderful combination that you'd like to see grow.

Chris Ashton, for me, needs to step up, as I've been disappointed with him in recent months. We've all seen what Manu Tuilagi can do. What a powerful beast he is and that's the only time it makes me glad to think I'm retired, because I wouldn't want to be playing against guys like that.

If England can show the desire and intensity they did against New Zealand, they're going to win an awful lot of games.

■ Phil Vickery was talking to Peter Thompson



TOP MANU: England centre Manu Tuilagi breaks away to score as England beat New Zealand at Twickenham in December

RBS 6 Nations by numbers

35 Most points in a game: Jonny Wilkinson (England v Italy, 2001)

89 Most points in a season: Jonny Wilkinson (England, 2001)

551 Most career points in the championship: Ronan O'Gara (Ireland, 2000-present)

5 Most tries in a game: George Lindsay (Scotland v Wales, 1887)

8 Most tries in a season: Cyril Lowe (England, 1914) and Ian Smith (Scotland, 1925)

25 Most career tries in the championship: Brian O'Driscoll (Ireland, 2000-present)

9 Most conversions in a match: Jonny Wilkinson (England v Italy, 2001)

24 Most conversions in a season: Jonny Wilkinson (England, 2001)

89 Most career conversions in the championship: Jonny Wilkinson (England, 1998-2011)

7 Most penalties in a match: Simon Hodgkinson, Rob Andrew, Jonny Wilkinson (all England), Neil Jenkins (Wales), Gerald Merceron (France), Chris Paterson (Scotland)

18 Most penalties in a season: Simon Hodgkinson (England, 1991), Jonny Wilkinson (England, 2000), Gerald Merceron (France, 2002)

113 Most career penalties in the championship: Jonny Wilkinson (1998-2011)

3 Most drop-goals in a match: Pierre Albadejo, Jean-Patrick Lescaur (both France), Diego Dominguez (Italy), Neil Jenkins (Wales)

5 Most drop-goals in a season: Guy Cumberbarro (France, 1967), Diego Dominguez (Italy, 2000), Neil Jenkins (Wales, 2001), Jonny Wilkinson (England, 2003), Dan Parks (Scotland, 2010)

11 Most career drop-goals in the championship: Jonny Wilkinson (1998-2011)

61 Most championship appearances: Ronan O'Gara (Ireland, 2000-present)

80 Most points in a single match: England v Italy (2001)

57 Biggest winning margin: England 80 Italy 23 (2001)

229 Most points in a season: England (2001)

29 Most tries in a season: England (2001)

2 Fewest tries conceded in a season: Wales (2008)

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Clubs are provided with online guidance and tools to help them co-ordinate a community-wide effort to give their facilities a 'make-over' in preparation for the season ahead.

■ Visit www.rbs6nations.com/rugbyforce





PLAYER VERDICTS



FRANCE

REFORMED BAD BOY MATHIEU BASTAREAUD

"I decided I had to really push myself in training and no longer content myself with just getting by.

"It would have been disrespectful to the club (Toulon) and the supporters – there are a lot of people who would like to be in my place.

"I'm very happy and very proud to be called up. It's not a massive surprise, because my name has been bandied about a bit at the moment.

"I've been waiting for this call-up, and I want to share it with my team-mates, the club, fans and my family, all of whom have always believed in me, notably in the tough times.



"In the first six months of this season, I've worked really hard with the Toulon backroom staff and the work has paid off.

"I don't know if I'll make the cut for the 23-strong group, but everything in its own time. For the moment, I'm thrilled."

France centre Mathieu Bastareaud before his three-year absence from Test rugby



ITALY

FORMER ITALY FLY-HALF CRAIG GOWER

"They haven't got the infrastructure that England or France have. It is funny when journalists give them a spray (criticism) because what do they want?

"They haven't got the money to put in the infrastructure – everyone wants to play soccer there. "Sometimes they get a bit of a hammering but they play with heart and passion, and that is the best thing about it.

"I don't know how big it is in schools. You only have two teams that play professionally in the top flight.

"Underneath that, I don't think there is much there. They are fighting an uphill battle.

"You have got to have a great kicking game and be ready to play. Sometimes we just don't come up to scratch in that area.

"The hardest thing about the Italians is the consistency of our attack. We have always been known as a forward-dominated team.

"They played some good rugby against Australia and they are a different team at home. They have a drive and passion whenever they take the field, and it is more at home.

"It is just a lack of polish in their play, and that is what lets them down because you can't do that against the top teams."



Lancaster still bombing along

by Alex Lowe

N the space of 12 months, Stuart Lancaster has turned English rugby from looking n the gutter to looking at he stars.

It has been a radical about-turn in image and attitude, if not always fortunes, capped by England's sensational 38-21 victory over New Zealand n December.

When Lancaster took charge, initially on an interim basis for the 2012 RBS 6 Nations, he decided he only way to recover rom the Rugby World Cup all-out was to start afresh.

Fifteen members of Martin Johnson's World Cup squad were axed, and Lancaster went on to cap 17 new players over the course of England's 12 Tests last year.

The highlights were andmark RBS 6 Nations victories over France in Paris and Ireland at Twickenham, a draw with South Africa in Port Elizabeth after two bruising

England rebuilding job gathering pace

defeats – and then the All Blacks triumph.

England had fallen to narrow and frustrating defeats over the previous two Saturdays, to Australia and the Springboks, but responded with immense character to down the world champions.

Through the course of those 12 matches, Lancaster uncovered a new generation. The likes of Owen Farrell, Brad Barritt, Joe Launchbury, Alex Goode, Tom Youngs and Geoff Parling have all shone on the Test stage, and Chris Robshaw has developed into an impressive leader.

The challenge for England now, heading into their second RBS 6 Nations under Lancaster, is to build on those foundations and deliver on their potential as they build towards the next Rugby World Cup. "So

many things have happened in a year, but it is interesting to sit here a year on and remember where we were as a group," Lancaster said.

"The balance I have to strike is between achieving a winning team in the here and now and developing a team with the right level of experience to win in 2015.

"We made 15 changes this time last year. It wasn't just the 15 changes, it was the significance of the number of caps that were left in that side at the time.

"We have a lot of lads like Owen Farrell, Brad Barritt and Manu Tuilagi who are under 25 and should be around for a long time.

"Even now, with the evolution of the team, you see an experienced player like Tom Palmer drop out of the squad and a younger player like Joe Launchbury

come in. The majority of the squad should be able to go through way beyond the 2015 World Cup."

That balance is a hard one to strike. Each time England's inexperience and naivety is exposed, Lancaster is open to criticism of his so-called 'youth policy'.

But on each occasion that has happened – against the Springboks in June, and during the autumn series – England have responded with character.

While the bald statistics say England won six and drew one of their 12 Tests last year, the strides taken in such a short time make it hard to argue that 2012 was anything other than a success.

"What gave me and the team the opportunity to develop was the last RBS 6 Nations and how we won four out of five," Lancaster reflected. "Even the Wales game, against a team that won the Grand Slam, probably could and should have been won. The France



REVOLUTIONARY: England coach Stuart Lancaster

away game and the Ireland game gave us the bedrock to build, but it is not going to be a straight line upwards.

"We were still hugely disappointed at having lost two games in the autumn to Australia and South Africa. But to turn it

around and get the All Blacks win was fantastic."

It was Graham Rowntree who first credited Lancaster with dragging English rugby "from the gutter".

The challenge now, three years out from the World Cup, is to reach for the stars.

IRELAND

FLY-HALF

JONATHAN SEXTON

"Playing with guys like Brian O'Driscoll has been an honour for me, and I'd put a lot of other players in that bracket – you learn so much from these guys."

"They earned their reputations by producing in an Ireland jersey year in, year out, but it is time now for the younger guys to come in and start taking

ownership of the team. The younger guys have produced on occasion but we haven't done it consistently, and that's what we need to do now."

"People probably think I'm a new boy because I look about 15, but I'd say I'm somewhere in the middle."

"I've just turned 27, so it's up to people like me to take charge of the team."



SCOTLAND

MATT SCOTT ON
ANDY ROBINSON

"It was tough watching Andy resign. That really rams it home to you just what the consequences are of a poor result."

"We're talking about someone's livelihood. I'm still quite young and it's the first time I've experienced something like that, and it wasn't nice. We are professional sportsmen

and these are the risks you take. It's not like we work in an office. Our successes and failures are played out in front of the nation, but it still doesn't leave you feeling great when a guy loses his job because you've had a bad afternoon."

"The defeat to Tonga was just awful, and I don't think I've ever played in as bad a team performance as that. We were all terrible."



WALES

SQUAD NEWCOMER
ANDREW COOMBS

"It was a massive shock. I was just blown away, to be honest with you. Obviously, I knew there were a lot of injuries and I've been watching it closely, but I never quite believed I would get picked."

"I hadn't spoken to anyone in the Welsh management, and that is the reason why I was so shocked. I probably thought they may give the heads-up now and again. It just came out of the blue, really. But it's happened, so I am chuffed."

"I am abrasive and I like to get in people's faces. I just think you've got to give 100 per cent all the time. If you upset people on the way, you've just got to do it."

"At 28, it is probably quite late to get your first cap, but it's better than no cap. I took my opportunity with the Dragons, so why can't I take it

again? I can't wait to get in there, and I just want to get the shirt on and play. Obviously, I've got to get picked, but hopefully that will happen."

"It's pointless just going in there, and being part of it. I would just be wasting my time if I did that. I'm going in there for one thing, and that is to play. I will just keep trying, and whatever comes my way I will take it."



Five players to watch

JOE LAUNCHBURY
(England, lock)

The dynamic Wasps lock made his international breakthrough during England's autumn campaign and made such an impact that he was named man of the series and suddenly found himself being talked of as a potential Lions tourist. The hype is justified.

TIM VISSER
(Scotland, wing)

The flying Dutchman made his debut against Fiji in June immediately after qualifying for Scotland. He has been the leading try-scorer in the RaboDirect Pro12 for the last three seasons. This is his first RBS 6 Nations campaign.

LEIGH HALFPENNY
(Wales, full-back)

The Welsh squad may be off form and ravaged by injury but Halfpenny is their shining light. He was Wales' best player in 2012 and has the opportunity to nail down the Lions full-back jersey during the RBS 6 Nations.

CRAIG GILROY
(Ireland, wing)

The Ulsterman announced himself on the international stage in scintillating fashion against Argentina in the autumn. Gilroy has pace, footwork and an eye for the tryline that will illuminate the RBS 6 Nations.

LOUIS PICAMOLES
(France, No.8)

France are blessed with formidable back-row options, but the pick at present is Toulouse No.8 Picamoles, a powerful runner and ferocious ball-carrier who was outstanding in their autumn campaign.

Compiled by
Alex Lowe

Robshaw silences critics

ON December 1 last year, Chris Robshaw joined an exclusive club of England captains to have beaten New Zealand.

It was a remarkable end to a remarkable year for Robshaw, who led England into a new era and Harlequins to their first Premiership title.

Robshaw is only the sixth member of that club and the first since Martin Johnson, the only captain to have beaten the All Blacks twice.

In the eyes of Lewis Moody, Robshaw's predecessor as England captain, that is not the only thing the two leaders have in common.

"I have been very impressed with Chris, he has done an outstanding job," said Moody.

"As players you want to be inspired. Martin Johnson was never the greatest orator. He always had some words to say, but the reason you followed him is because he would die for the team, die for the

by Alex Lowe

cause. He would throw himself into everything, and Chris is very similar."

"His approach to the game is to just play and he is not worried about the other stuff. He will learn."

"He came in for some criticism in the autumn for his decision-making, but leadership is not something you just suddenly become accustomed to after a handful of games."

"He is relatively young and he will continue to learn. He is improving game on game. All you can do is perform and that is all you can ask of a captain."

Those decisions haunted Robshaw for a few days. Against Australia he turned down penalty kicks at goal to go in search of a try that never came. England lost 20-14. A week later against South Africa, Robshaw ordered Owen Farrell to kick for goal with only two minutes left when England needed a try to win. They made a hash of the restart



LEADER:

Chris Robshaw has bounced back from the criticism that followed his decisions against Australia and South Africa

and lost 16-15. But they came back to beat the All Blacks, and Robshaw said: "It was definitely satisfying for me, it's nice to finish on something like that."

"As a team and individually we had enjoyed a lot of good press. It was my first time really experiencing the other side."

"I went into camp at the start of the New Zealand week and my head was a bit down. The boys spoke to me and said 'don't worry, we're going to win this weekend and it will be fine'."

"It really made me appreciate the character of the guys we have in the

England squad at the moment. It was pretty special to say stuff like that."

"When you've been kicked down and written off and this and that has been said about you, it makes you closer together."

England head into this year's RBS 6 Nations on a wave of excitement following the All Blacks result, but Robshaw has already had to file that memory away.

The experience and the confidence gained from such a record-breaking performance is vital to the development of the team. But so is the desire,

articulated by Robshaw, that England must use that result and that performance as a launch pad for greater success.

"Last season we were a new squad, new coaches and no one knew what to expect from us," he said.

"Now we have a bit more experience and everyone knows what the RBS 6 Nations involves. It's about backing up what we did last year."

"New Zealand is the benchmark of where we want to be as a team. It's where we strive to be. New Zealand has gone now, it's about the RBS 6 Nations."

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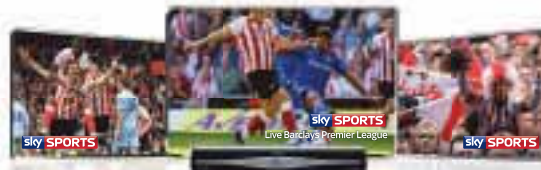
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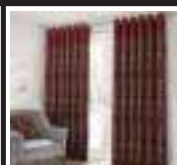
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FA Cup Fourth Round

Bolton1	Everton2
Sordell 27	Pienaar 18, Heitinga 90
HT 1-1	Att 18,760
Brighton2	Arsenal1
Barnes 33	Giroud 16,56
Ullola 62	Walcott 85
HT 1-1	Att 27,113
Derby City0	Blackburn3
	Kazim-Richards 44
	Dann 66, Rhodes 71
	Att 14,013
HT 0-1	
Huddersfield1	Leicester0
Novak 74 pen	Wood 82
HT 0-0	Att 11,945
Hull0	Barnsley1
	Dagnall 70
HT 0-0	Att 9,932
Macclesfield0	Wigan1
	Gomez 7 pen
HT 0-1	Att 5,849
Man UtdL	FulhamL

Middlesbrough2	Aldershot1
Jutkiewicz 83,90	Hylton 89
HT 0-0	Att 12,684
Norwich0	Luton1
	Rendell 80
HT 0-0	Att 26,521
Q.P.R.2	M K Dons4
Bothroyd 83	Traore 4 og, Lowe 40
Da Silva 90	Harley 50, Potter 56
HT 0-2	Att 17,081
Reading4	Sheff Utd0
Hunt 6,50, Leightwood 40	
McCleary 54	
HT 2-0	Att 14,715
Stoke0	Man City1
	Zabala 85
HT 0-0	Att 19,814

npower Championship

Bristol City2	Ipswich1
Davies 47, Stead 90	Murphy 30
HT 0-1	Att 12,662
Burnley1	Birmingham2
Wallace 56 pen	Davies 21, King 90
HT 0-1	Att 11,576
Charlton1	Sheff Wed2
Jackson 47	R Johnson 84, Lita 89
HT 0-0	Att 20,292
Nottm For0	Watford3
	Vydra 20,72, Deeney 34
HT 0-2	Att 20,732
Wolves1	Blackpool2
Ebanks-Blake 15	Line 45,78
HT 1-1	Att 20,100

P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Cardiff	28	12	1	25	8	7	2	5	22	60	21
Leicester	28	10	2	23	11	5	3	6	16	12	50
Hull	28	8	2	4	21	14	7	3	4	18	17
Watford	28	7	2	5	24	15	8	2	4	32	22
Crystal P	28	8	5	1	33	16	5	4	5	17	19
Middlesbrough	28	10	1	3	29	16	5	1	8	18	23
Brighton	28	5	6	3	20	13	5	6	3	20	17
Burnley	29	7	4	4	23	16	5	2	7	21	26
Millwall	28	7	2	5	20	17	4	6	4	20	21
Nottm For	29	7	4	4	21	19	3	7	4	18	21
Leeds Utd	28	9	2	3	20	17	3	8	19	27	41
Charlton	29	4	5	6	20	23	6	4	4	19	17
Derby City	28	7	5	2	30	17	3	8	12	24	38
Blackpool	29	4	6	4	25	19	5	4	6	22	37
Blackburn	28	6	2	6	16	17	3	8	3	22	20
Bolton	28	6	3	21	15	2	5	7	19	26	34
Birmingham	29	4	5	5	18	22	4	5	6	20	24
Wolves	29	4	5	6	18	22	4	5	1	8	16
Huddersfield	28	4	6	4	18	19	4	3	7	14	29
Sheff Wed	29	4	2	8	16	25	5	3	7	17	19
Ipswich	29	3	5	6	17	22	5	3	7	12	29
Peterboro	28	4	1	9	22	29	4	1	9	17	23
Barnsley	28	3	4	7	12	19	3	3	8	17	25
Bristol City	28	4	2	8	26	34	3	2	9	14	22

npower League One

CHERRIES3	Crewe1
Pitman 8 pen,67,82 pen	Colclough 76
HT 1-0	Att 8,628
Carlisle1	Scunthorpe1
Symington 76	Hawley 52
HT 0-0	Att 8,829
Colchester2	Walsall0
Ibheh 79, Sears 89	
HT 0-0	Att 2,865
Leyton OL	Notts CntyL
McCreary 65, Baudry 68	Hughes 78
HT 0-0	Att 3,578
POMPEY1	Hartlepool3
Wallace 67	Baldwin 18, Poole 52
HT 0-1	Att 10,981
Preston2	Coventry2
Cummins 30	Rutherford 90
Wroe 60	Att 8,474
HT 1-1	
Shrewsbury0	Bury0
HT 0-0	Att 4,795
TranmereP	SwindonP
Postponed - due to frozen pitch.	

	HOME						AWAY						
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Tranmere	29	8	4	2	25	11	8	4	3	21	15	56	
Doncaster	28	7	2	5	18	16	10	3	1	25	9	56	
Brentford	28	8	4	2	24	15	5	7	2	17	12	50	
Swindon	27	8	4	3	32	8	6	3	3	17	11	49	
CHERRIES	29	8	6	1	29	13	5	4	5	21	26	49	
Sheff Utd	28	6	6	2	23	15	6	6	2	16	11	48	
Coventry	30	5	5	5	22	18	7	3	5	27	20	44	
M K Dons	26	8	3	3	22	13	4	4	4	16	13	43	
Yeovil	27	6	2	5	19	15	7	1	6	24	23	42	
Crewe	27	6	3	4	22	19	6	2	6	14	20	41	
Walsall	30	6	4	5	21	22	5	4	6	19	23	41	
Notts Cnty	26	5	3	6	18	17	5	7	0	20	10	40	
Crewe	28	7	2	4	15	12	4	5	6	20	25	40	
Stevenage	26	3	5	17	24	8	2	3	17	12	40		
Leyton O	27	6	1	6	14	14	5	2	7	16	21	36	
Preston	28	3	7	5	19	19	5	4	4	18	17	35	
Carlisle	28	5	3	7	21	30	4	3	6	14	20	33	
Shrewsbury	29	3	7	3	18	15	1	6	8	13	22	31	
Oldham	29	3	3	8	13	18	4	3	8	15	23	27	
Colchester	28	5	3	6	18	19	2	2	10	9	25	26	
Scunthorpe	28	1	5	7	13	25	5	3	7	16	23	26	
Bury	28	2	5	6	12	19	2	6	7	15	23	23	
POMPEY	27	3	2	9	15	20	2	4	7	15	27	21	
Hartlepool	28	1	3	9	9	22	2	4	9	14	28	16	

npower League Two

BradfordP	WycombeP
Postponed - due to frozen pitch.	
Burton Albion1	Barnet0
Maghoma 4 pen	
HT 1-0	Att 2,050
Chesterfield0	Southend1
	Tomlin 83
HT 0-0	Att 4,817
Dagenham1	Morecambe2
Wilkinson 61	Drummond 81, Williams 83
HT 0-0	Att 1,370
Fleetwood T3	Oxford Utd0
Matt 9, Crowther 58	
Parkin 86	
HT 1-0	Att 2,461
Gillingham1	York1
McDonald 85	Lee 17 og
HT 0-1	Att 4,893
PlymouthL	Acc StanleyL
HT 0-0	Att 6,509
Rotherham1	Bristol R3
Noble 73	Brown 43 pen, Harrison 52
HT 0-1	Att 5,582

	HOME							AWAY				
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Port Vale	28	6	4	3	30	15	9	4	2	28	17	53
Gillingham	27	6	4	4	26	15	9	3	1	20	9	52
Northampton	28	10	2	3	30	13	3	4	6	16	24	45
Exeter	28	4	4	6	19	20	9	2	3	24	19	45
Cheltenham	28	8	4	2	22	12	4	5	15	22	45	
Burton Alb	29	10	3	2	31	15	3	3	8	9	24	45
Southend	28	5	4	4	17	12	7	2	5	25	17	43
Fleetwood T	28	6	5	4	19	16	5	3	3	18	12	43
Rotherham	27	8	0	7	29	23	5	4	3	14	17	43
Bradford	27	8	2	4	23	13	5	5	15	20	40	
Chesterfield	29	6	5	4	26	17	4	4	6	11	15	39
Oxford Utd	27	6	3	3	20	14	5	2	8	20	28	38
Rochdale	29	4	4	6	18	16	6	3	6	28	31	37
Dagenham	30	6	4	5	22	17	4	3	8	21	27	37
York	29	4	5	5	18	19	4	3	8	18	19	37
Morecambe	29	5	6	3	18	16	4	3	8	17	21	36
Wycombe	28	5	4	5	16	14	5	2	7	17	26	36
Torquay	26	6	5	2	24	20	2	5	10	13	34	
Acc Stanley	28	4	3	7	13	20	4	3	7	17	25	30
Barnet	29	4	5	5	19	20	3	3	9	10	22	29
Aldershot	28	3	3	8	12	20	4	5	14	20	29	
Bristol R	27	4	3	3	6	18	23	3	4	7	16	27
Plymouth	28	4	4	6	18	20	2	5	7	13	21	27
Wimbledon	27	2	4	8	14	24	5	2	6	18	26	27

Scottish League Cup Semi-final

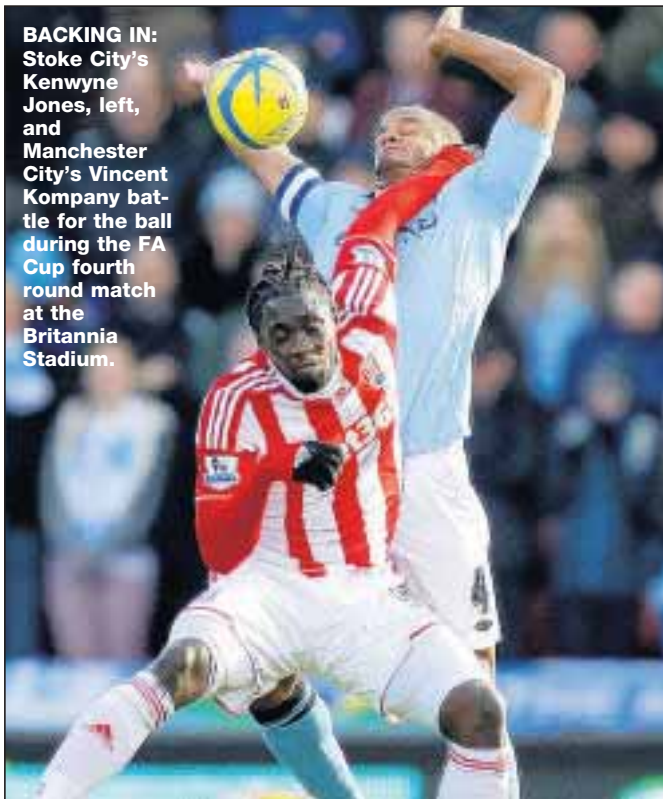
Inverness CTL	HeartsL
A Shinnie 49	Ngoe 66
HT 0-0	
Extra time being played: score after 90 mins 1-1.	

Clydesdale Bank Premier

Dundee Utd	1	Ross Cnty	1
Mackay-Steven 52		Brittain 82	
HT 0-0		Att 5,117	

		HOME					AWAY						
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Celtic	23	8	2	2	22	7	7	2	2	26	9	49	
Inverness CT22	5	5	2	26	17	4	5	1	21	18	37		
Motherwell	23	4	5	3	19	18	6	2	3	21	14	37	
Hibernian	23	6	3	3	18	12	3	3	5	14	18	33	
Aberdeen	23	3	5	3	13	13	5	2	5	17	18	31	
St Johnstn	23	4	4	3	12	12	3	5	4	14	17	30	
Dundee Utd	24	2	7	3	22	21	5	2	5	15	20	30	
Kilmarnock	22	4	2	6	18	18	3	5	2	16	12	28	
Hearts	22	5	3	3	13	13	1	5	5	8	13	26	
Ross Cnty	22	2	5	2	9	9	3	5	17	23	25		
St Mirren	23	4	3	5	19	26	2	4	5	12	16	25	
Dundee	22	2	0	8	8	21	1	4	7	6	21	13	

BACKING IN:
Stoke City's
Kenwyne
Jones, left,
and
Manchester
City's Vincent
Kompany bat-
tle for the ball
during the FA
Cup fourth
round match
at the
Britannia
Stadium.



Scottish Division One

Dumbarton	3	Hamilton	1
Turner 34			May 60
Gilhaney 56			
Page 90 og			
HT 1-0			Att 878
Dunfrmline	0	Livingston	1
HT 0-1			Andreu 21
Falkirk	4	Airdrie Utd	3
Taylor 9,35			Di Giacomo 57 pen
Murdoch 24			McLaren 88
Dods 73			J Boyle 90
HT 0-0			Att 2,715
Morton	1	Raith	0
Tidear 53			Att 2,006
HT 0-0			
Partick	2	Cowdenbth	1
Craig 25			Hemmings 9
Balatoni 44			
HT 2-1			Att 2,543